ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM- CANTO 10

JĪVA GOSVĀMĪ'S

LAGHU VAIṢṆAVA TOṢAṆĪ

Volume 3

HH Bhanu Swami

Laghu Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī

Volume 3 (Chapters 61 - 90)

By
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A commentary on 10th canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Translated into English by
HH Bhanu Swami

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of International Society for Krishna Consciousness
who inspired the world to take up the path of bhakti.

Foreword

Sanātana Gosvāmī wrote Bṛhad-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī, an elaborate commentary on the Tenth Canto to explain in detail what Śrīdhara Svāmī covered briefly, and to give devotional meaning where Śrīdhara Svāmī gave brahmanvada explanations. Jīva Gosvāmī wrote Laghu-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī as a summary version of Bṛhad-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī. The commentaries on first eight chapters of the Tenth Canto are virtually the same but after that point there are increasing differences. Ultimately this commentary is approximately same size as the Bṛhad-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī. He completed this work in Śakābda 1504.

Table of Contents

Title Page

Copyright

Dedication

Foreword

Table of Contents

61. Lord Balarāma Slays Rukmī

62. The Meeting of Ūṣā and Aniruddha

63. Lord Kṛṣṇa Fights with Bāṇāsura

64. The Deliverance of King Nṛga

65. Balarāma goes to Vṛndāvana

66. Pauṇḍraka, the False Vāsudeva

67. Lord Balarāma Slays Dvivida Gorilla

68. The Marriage of Sāmba

69. Nārada Muni Visits Lord Kṛṣṇa's Palaces in Dvārakā

70. Lord Kṛṣṇa's Daily Activities

71. Lord Kṛṣṇa Travels to Indraprastha

72. The Slaying of the Demon Jarāsandha

73. Lord Kṛṣṇa Blesses the Liberated Kings

74. The Deliverance of Śiśupāla at the Rājasūya Sacrifice

75. Duryodhana Humiliated

76. The Battle Between Śālva and the Vṛṣṇis

77. Lord Kṛṣṇa Slays the Demon Śālva

78. The Killing of Dantavakra, Vidūratha and Romaharṣaṇa

79. Lord Balarāma Goes on Pilgrimage

80. The Brāhmaṇa Sudāmā Visits Lord Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā

81. The Lord Blesses Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa

82. The Lord Blesses Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa

83. Draupadī Meets the Queens of Kṛṣṇa

84. The Sages' Teachings at Kuruksetra

85. Lord Kṛṣṇa Instructs Vasudeva and Retrieves Devakī's Sons

86. Lord Kṛṣṇa Instructs Vasudeva and Retrieves Devakī's Sons

87. Prayers by the Personified Vedas

88. Lord Śiva Saved from Vṛkāsura

89. Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna Retrieve a Brāhmaṇa's Sons

90. Summary of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Glories

About the Author-Translator

Chapter Sixty-one
Lord Balarāma Slays Rukmī

Text 61 1

śrī-śuka uvāca
ekaikaśas tāḥ kṛṣṇasya putrān daśa-daśābalāḥ
ajījanann anavamān pituḥ sarvātma-sampadā

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Each of Kṛṣṇa's wives gave birth to ten sons, who were not less than their father, having all his personal opulence.

COMMENTARY: His wives, who did not have a goal without him (abalāḥ), had ten sons each who were not less than their father.

Text 61.2

gṛhād anapagaṁ vīkṣya rāja-putryo 'cyutaṁ sthitam
preṣṭhaṁ nyamaṁsata svaṁ svaṁ na tat-tattva-vidaḥ striyaḥ

Because each of these princesses saw that Acyuta never left her palace, each thought herself the Lord's favorite. These women did not understand the full truth about him.

COMMENTARY: This verse rejects the impossibility that he could produce so many sons in each of his queens by showing something even more difficult to do. The verse shows the strong attachment of each of them to him. Each thought that he was staying with her alone—everyday at the appropriate time he would leave but then return to her palace. Each thought definitely (vi-īkṣya) that he did not go to any other queen's palace. Most were princesses but some were daughters of devatās and others (like Kālindī and Jāmbavatī). Each thought that she was the favorite of Kṛṣṇa. They did not know his nature as ātmārāma (tat-tattva-vidaḥ) or they did not know that he was in all the palaces (tat-tattva-vidaḥ) since they could not investigate the matter because of being bewildered by the intensity of pastimes in their own palace.

Text 61.3

cārv-abja-kośa-vadanāyata-bāhu-netra-
sa-prema-hāsa-rasa-vīkṣita-valgu-jalpaiḥ
sammohitā bhagavato na mano vijetuṁ
svair vibhramaiḥ samaśakan vanitā vibhūmnaḥ

The Supreme Lord's wives were fully enchanted by his lovely, lotus face, his long arms and large eyes, his loving glances imbued with laughter, and his charming talks with them. But with all their charms these ladies could not conquer the mind of the all-powerful Lord.

COMMENTARY: "He thus appears very lusty." No, he was controlled by their prema. That is shown, along with their bewilderment in two verses (3-4). Vanitāḥ means women who caused his intense anurāga. They could not at all (saṁ-aśakan) control (jetum) the mind of the Lord with their feminine (svaiḥ) gestures (vibhramaiḥ) as much as his wives with the most intense prema could, but that too only to the degree of their prema for him. According to their prema he had prema (sa-prema). The word vanitāḥ (beloved women) indicates that he did not leave their houses and was controlled by them. Though the prefixes sam and vi in this verse indicate the same meaning, the word sam indicates signs in the Lord that he was controlled and vi indicates signs in his wives that they could do it. None of this was visible. This was the cause of the wives' making gestures. They were completely agitated (sam-mohitāḥ) with prema by his beautiful lotus face, etc. First, they saw his face. Then they lowered their eyes in shyness and saw his arms. Then they boldly developed the urge to embrace him tightly. Again they looked at his face and met his eyes with theirs. Then he glanced at them with joyful eyes and spoke to them. They were mutually controlled by each other's prema. Though they tried to control his mind like the wives with the highest prema through their gestures filled with desire, he could not be controlled. He had no material lust, but special prema. That was suitable for him since he by his nature was completely perfect, with everything depending on him (vibhūmnaḥ). Therefore, lust was not possible in him. But he had the great quality of being controlled by his devotees.

ahaṁ bhakta-parādhīno hy asvatantra iva dvija
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ

O brāhmaṇa! I am completely under the control of my devotees. I am not at all independent. My heart is controlled by the pure devotees. What to speak of my devotee, even those who are devotees of my devotee are very dear to me. SB 9.4.63

vidyāmayo hi yah sa kathaṁ viṣayī bhavati
yo hi kāṁena kāmān kāmayate sa kāmī bhavati
yo hi vai tva-kāmena kāmān kāmayate so 'py akāmī bhavati

How can he who is full of knowledge be attracted to material objects? He who desires material objects with lust is a material enjoyer. He who desires objects out of love for you is without material desire. Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad

Text 61.4

smāyāvaloka-lava-darśita-bhāva-hāri
bhrū-maṇḍala-prahita-saurata-mantra-śauṇḍaiḥ
patnyas tu śoḍaśa-sahasram anaṅga-bāṇair
yasyendriyaṁ vimathitum karaṇair na śekuḥ

The arched eyebrows of these sixteen thousand queens enchantingly expressed those ladies' secret intentions through coyly smiling sidelong glances. Thus, their eyebrows boldly sent forth conjugal messages. Yet even with these arrows of Cupid, and with other means as well, they could not agitate Lord Kṛṣṇa's senses.

COMMENTARY: This verse describes the special gestures they displayed (prahita) to attract him. Their brows were laden with secret plans related to love affairs (saurata-mantra-śauṇḍaiḥ), endowed with arrows of Cupid. This suggests their brows were like bows with the glances like arrows. Since they failed to attract him, they sent out an abundance (maṇḍala) of glances steeped with secret plans for love affairs. The word yasya does not depend on a correlative. A clause with yat need not have a corresponding tat, since the relationship is implied. An example is found the verse sādhu candramasi puṣkaraiḥ kṛtaṁ nīlitaṁ yad abhirāmatādhike of Kāvya-prakāśa 7.188. The present verse indicates that the gopīs of Vraja were superior to the queens because of their possession of the highest pure prema.

Text 61.5

itthaṁ ramā-patim avāpya patiṁ striyas tā
brahmādayo 'pi na viduḥ padavīṁ yadīyām
bhejur mudāviratam edhitayānurāga-
hāsāvaloka-nava-saṅgama-lālasādyam

Thus these women obtained as their husband the master of the goddess of fortune, although even great devatās like Brahmā do not know how to approach him. With ever-increasing pleasure, they felt loving attraction for him, exchanged smiling glances with him, eagerly anticipated associating with him in ever-fresh intimacy and enjoyed in many other ways.

COMMENTARY: This verse shows that Brahmā and others cannot compare to the queens in service. They had obtained the husband of Rukmiṇī or the husband of the gopīs as their husband. They enjoyed with him, experiencing increasing joy with a great desire for the fresh association through glances laden with love and smiles.

Text 61.6

pratyudgamāsana-varārhaṇa-pāda-śauca-
tāmbūla-viśramaṇa-vījana-gandha-mālyaiḥ
keśa-prasāra-śayana-snapanopahāryaiḥ
dāsī-śatā api vibhor vidadhuḥ sma dāsyam

Although the Supreme Lord's queens each had hundreds of maidservants, they chose to personally serve the Lord by approaching him humbly, offering him a seat, worshiping him with excellent paraphernalia, bathing and massaging his feet, giving him betel to chew, fanning him, anointing him with fragrant sandalwood paste, adorning him with flower garlands, dressing his hair, arranging his bed, bathing him and presenting him with various gifts.

COMMENTARY: Sometimes prasādha is seen instead of prasāra. In this order they served him. Varārhaṇa refers to sprinkling handfuls of flowers, popped rice and jewels. Śrīdhara Svāmī refers to descriptions of their service in the First Canto.

Text 61.7

tāsāṁ yā daśa-putrāṇāṁ kṛṣṇa-strīṇāṁ puroditāḥ
aṣṭau mahiṣyas tat-putrān pradyumnādīn gṛṇāmi te

Among Kṛṣṇa's wives, each of whom had ten sons, I previously mentioned eight principal queens. I shall now recite for you the names of those eight queens' sons, headed by Pradyumna.

COMMENTARY: I will describe only the ten sons of the eight queens, since describing others will increase the volume of the text too much.

Text 61.8–9

cārudeṣṇaḥ sudeṣṇaś ca cārudehaś ca vīryavān
sucāruś cāruguptaś ca bhadracārus tathā paraḥ
cārucandro vicāruś ca cāruś ca daśamo hareḥ
pradyumna-pramukhā jātā rukmiṇyāṁ nāvamāḥ pituḥ

The first son of Queen Rukmiṇī was Pradyumna, and also born of her were Cārudeṣṇa, Sudeṣṇa and the powerful Cārudeha, along with Sucāru, Cārugupta, Bhadracāru, Cārucandra, Vicāru and Cāru, the tenth. None of these sons of Kṛṣṇa was less than his father.

COMMENTARY: Each of them was strong (vīryavān). Bhadracāru was younger than Cārugupta. That is indicated by tathā paraḥ. The succession is from oldest to youngest. The tenth is stated as such to emphasize that there was not an eleventh son and that Pradyumna was the eldest. The Lord was all attractive (hariḥ) and thus his sons were similar according to the maxim "like the seed so the sprout." None of them (indicated by the word ca repeated) were less than their father. This was stated before, but for emphasis it is repeated. The following lists are similar.

Text 61.10–12

bhānuḥ subhānuḥ svarbhānuḥ prabhānur bhānumāṁs tathā
candrabhānur bṛhadbhānur atibhānus tathāṣṭamaḥ
śrībhānuḥ pratibhānuś ca satyabhāmātmajā daśa
sāmbaḥ sumitraḥ purujic chatajic ca sahasrajit
vijayaś citraketuś ca vasumān draviḍaḥ kratuḥ
jāmbavatyāḥ sutā hy ete sāmbādyāḥ pitṛ-sammatāḥ

The ten sons of Satyabhāmā were Bhānu, Subhānu, Svarbhānu, Prabhānu, Bhānumān, Candrabhānu, Bṛhadbhānu, Atibhānu (the eighth), Śrībhānu and Pratibhānu. Sāmba, Sumitra, Purujit, Śatajit, Sahasrajit, Vijaya, Citraketu, Vasumān, Draviḍa and Kratu were the sons of Jāmbavatī. These ten, headed by Sāmba, were approved by their father as sons.

COMMENTARY: Three lines list Satyabhāmā's sons. Atibhānu was elder to Śrībhānu. The order is from elder to youngest again. Though Jāmbavatī was elder, Satyambhāma's sons are mentioned first out of greater love for her and Sathyabhāmā's excellent position. That will be explained later. The next three lines list Jāmbavatī's sons. Instead of Draviṇa sometimes Draviḍa is seen. These only were confirmed as the sons of Jāmbavatī by their father. In the Sāmba Purāṇa it is stated that, by the arrangement of Nārada, Sāmba tried to deceive the sages with the iron lump. This was the will of the Lord, to teach common people as was the consequent curse on the dynasty.

Text 61.13

vīraś candro 'śvasenaś ca citragur vegavān vṛṣaḥ
āmaḥ śaṅkur vasuḥ śrīmān kuntir nāgnajiteḥ sutāḥ

The handsome sons of Nāgnajitī were Vīra, Candra, Aśvasena, Citragu, Vegavān, Vṛṣa, Āma, Śaṅku, Vasu and the Kunti.

COMMENTARY: Śrīmān (possessing beauty) can modify all the sons or modify the last son.

Text 61.14

śrutaḥ kavir vṛṣo vīraḥ subāhur bhadra ekalaḥ
śāntir darśaḥ pūrṇamāsaḥ kālindyāḥ somako 'varaḥ

Śruta, Kavi, Vṛṣa, Vīra, Subāhu, Bhadra, Śānti, Darśa and Pūrṇamāsa were sons of Kālindī. Her youngest son was Somaka.

COMMENTARY: Vṛṣa was also the name of one of Nāgnajitī's sons for some unavoidable reason. Different mothers used the same name for their sons. Vīra was also the name of another of Nāgnajitī's son. They were both brave warriors.

Text 61.15

praghoṣo gātravān siṁho balaḥ prabala ūrdhagaḥ
mādryāḥ putrā mahāśaktiḥ saha ojo 'parājitaḥ

Lakṣmaṇā's sons were Praghoṣa, Gātravān, Siṁha, Bala, Prabala, Ūrdhaga, Mahāśakti, Saha, Oja and Aparājita.

COMMENTARY: Saha and Oja are sons' names but they also possessed sahas (mental strength) and ojas (strength of senses). Instead of putrāḥ sometimes sutāḥ is seen.

Text 61.16

vṛko harṣo 'nilo gṛdhro vardhano 'nnāda eva ca
mahāṁsaḥ pāvano vahnir mitravindātmajāḥ kṣudhiḥ

Mitravindā's sons were Vṛka, Harṣa, Anila, Gṛdhra, Vardhana, Unnāda, Mahāṁsa, Pāvana, Vahni and Kṣudhi.

COMMENTARY: Mahāīśi is sometimes seen instead of Mahāṁsa and Bahvanna instead of Vardhana.

Text 61.17

saṅgrāmajid bṛhatsenaḥ śūraḥ praharaṇo 'rijit
jayaḥ subhadro bhadrāyā vāma āyuś ca satyakaḥ

Saṅgrāmajit, Bṛhatsena, Śūra, Praharaṇa, Arijit, Jaya and Subhadra were the sons of Bhadrā, together with Vāma, Āyur and Satyaka.

COMMENTARY: Śrīdhara Svāmī mentions Śaibya as another name of Bhadrā. However, Śaibya is another name of Mitravindā. This is probably a scribe's error. This is understood from Viṣṇu Purāṇa and at the meeting at Kurukṣetra, where Mitrāvindā is addressed as Śaibya. (SB 10.83.7)

Text 61.18

dīptimāṁs tāmrataptādyā rohiṇyās tanayā hareḥ
pradyamnāc cāniruddho 'bhūd rukmavatyāṁ mahā-balaḥ
putryāṁ tu rukmiṇo rājan nāmnā bhojakaṭe pure

Dīptimān, Tāmratapta and others were the sons of Kṛṣṇa and Rohiṇī. Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna fathered the greatly powerful Aniruddha in the

womb of Rukmavatī, the daughter of Rukmī. O King, this took place while they were living in the city of Bhojakaṭa.

COMMENTARY: Rohiṇī was the chief of the other sixteen thousand one hundred queens.

Text 61.19

eteṣāṁ putra-pautrāś ca babhūvuḥ koṭiśo nṛpa
mātaraḥ kṛṣṇa-jātīnāṁ sahasrāṇi ca ṣoḍaśa

My dear King, the sons and grandsons of Kṛṣṇa's children numbered in the tens of millions. Sixteen thousand mothers gave rise to this dynasty.

COMMENTARY: O King! Śukadeva expresses astonishment. Eteṣāṁ refers to the Pradyumna's and other sons of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 61.20

śrī-rājovāca
kathaṁ rukmy arī-putrāya prādād duhitaraṁ yudhi
kṛṣṇena paribhūtas taṁ hantuṁ randhraṁ pratīkṣate
etad ākhyāhi me vidvan dviṣor vaivāhikaṁ mithaḥ

King Parīkṣit said: How could Rukmī give his daughter to his enemy's son? After all, Rukmī had been defeated by Kṛṣṇa in battle and was waiting for an opportunity to kill him. Please explain this to me, O learned one—how these two inimical parties became united through marriage.

Text 61.21

anāgatam atītaṁ ca vartamānam atīndriyam
viprakṛṣṭaṁ vyavahitaṁ samyak paśyanti yoginaḥ

Mystic yogīs can perfectly see that which has not yet happened, as well as things in the past or present, beyond the senses, remote or blocked by physical obstacles.

COMMENTARY: "In general, it is understood that the Lord can do what seems impossible by his will or by his līlā-śakti. But it is impossible to understand his particular plan." Yogīs can know the future. You, his greatest devotee, know the particulars concerning the Lord because of your great bhakti.

Text 61.22

śrī-śuka uvāca
vṛtaḥ svayaṁ-vare sākṣād anaṇgo ’ṇga-yutas tayā
rājñaḥ sametān nirjitya jahāraika-ratho yudhi

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: At her svayaṁvara ceremony, Rukmavatī herself chose Pradyumna, who was the re-embodiment of Cupid. Then, although he fought alone on a single chariot, Pradyumna defeated the assembled kings in battle and took her away.

COMMENTARY: When it was certain that she chose Pradyumna, a svayaṁvara was arranged in order to fool the intolerant competitors. The cause of choosing him was that he was elsewhere absorbed in the mood of Cupid and here was endowed with his full form (aṅga-yutaḥ). Though she chose him at the svayaṁvara, he had to defeat kings who had gathered to fight with him out of envy. This showed his military prowess. After the marriage, to please Rukmī, his material uncle, he stayed a long time in Rukmī's city. Or returning to Dvārakā he again returned to Rukmī's city later, since Aniruddha was born in his city, mentioned already in verse 18.

Text 61.23

yady apy anusmaran vairaṁ rukmī kṛṣṇāvamānitaḥ
vyatarad bhāgineyāya sutāṁ kurvan svasuḥ priyam

Though Rukmī always remembered his enmity toward Kṛṣṇa, who had insulted him, in order to please his sister, he sanctioned his daughter's marriage to his nephew.

COMMENTARY: Rukmī arranged the svayaṁvara to please Rukmiṇī but also to announce that he was only secondarily approving. Or, remembering his enmity towards Kṛṣṇa, he was always thinking of this. But by strong affection for his sister, who was the Lord's great śakti, he gave his daughter to Pradyumna. Later also it is mentioned that he allowed the marriage to please his sister.

Text 61.24

rukmiṇyās tanayāṁ rājan kṛtavarma-suto balī
upayeme viśālākṣīṁ kanyāṁ cārumatīṁ kila

O King, Balī, the son of Kṛtavarmā, married Rukmiṇī's young daughter, large-eyed Cārumatī.

COMMENTARY: Cārumatī, representing all good qualities, was given to Balī. She is described as having large eyes since that indicates good fortune. It is said that a daughter with a face like the father is most fortunate.

Text 61.25

dauhitrāyāniruddhāya pautrīṁ rukmy ādadād dhareḥ
rocanāṁ baddha-vairo 'pi svasuḥ priya-cikīrṣayā
jānann adharmaṁ tad yaunaṁ sneha-pāśānubandhanaḥ

Rukmī gave his granddaughter Rocanā to his daughter's son, Aniruddha, despite Rukmī's relentless feud with Kṛṣṇa. Although Rukmī considered this marriage irreligious, he wanted to please his sister, bound as he was by the ropes of affection.

COMMENTARY: He gave his granddaughter to Aniruddha, though he had enmity towards Kṛṣṇa (hareḥ). Though there are cases of marrying one's uncle's daughter according to dharma, Rukmī considered it improper because it went against common behavior and produced a relationship with an enemy. But he gave Rocanā because of continual bonds (anu-bandhanaḥ) of affection for his sister.

Text 61.26

tasminn abhyudaye rājan rukmiṇī rāma-keśavau
puraṁ bhojakaṭaṁ jagmuḥ sāmba-pradyumnakādayaḥ

On the joyous occasion of that marriage, O King, Rukmiṇī, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and several of the Lord's sons, headed by Sāmba and Pradyumna, went to the city of Bhojakaṭa.

COMMENTARY: The result of his crooked behavior towards the Lord is now described. On the occasion of the great festival, they went to Bhojakaṭa. Rukmiṇī is mentioned first because she intended to go to her brother's house. Balarāma and Sāmba are mentioned before Kṛṣṇa and Pradyumna because they stayed at relatives' houses. Rukmī made arrangements for Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna and others at individual houses separate from his own house.

Text 61.27–28

tasmin nivṛtta udvāhe kāliṅga-pramukhā nṛpāḥ
dṛptās te rukmiṇaṁ procur balam akṣair vinirjaya
anakṣa-jño hy ayaṁ rājann api tad-vyasanaṁ mahat
ity ukto balam āhūya tenākṣair rukmy adīvyata

After the wedding, a group of arrogant kings headed by the king of Kaliṅga told Rukmī, "You should defeat Balarāma at dice. He's not expert at dice, O King, but still he's quite addicted to it." Thus advised, Rukmī challenged Balarāma and began a gambling match with him.

COMMENTARY: Hari-vaṁśa describes this:

saṁyuktā jñātayaś caiva rukmiṇaḥ suhṛdaś ca ye
āhūtā rukmiṇā te 'pi tatrājagmur narādhipāḥ

Kings who were relatives and friends of Rukmī, called by Rukmī, came there.

Defeat him because (hi) he is not an expert. They encouraged Rukmī. O King, as a king you know very well the game of dice.

te śubhāṁ kāñcana-stambhāṁ kusumair bhūṣitājirām
sabhām āviviśur hṛṣṭāḥ siktāṁ candana-vāriṇā
nikṛtyā taṁ jigīṣanto dākṣiṇātyā narādhipāḥ
maṇimuktāḥ suvarṇaṁ ca tatrāninyuḥ sahasraśaḥ
tataḥ prāvartata dyūtaṁ teṣām arati-nāśanam
kalahāyāspadaṁ ghoraṁ durmatīnāṁ kṣayāvaham

Joyfully they entered the auspicious assembly hall with gold pillars, sprinkled with sandal wood water, decorated with flowers. The southern kings, desiring that Rukmī win over Balarāma and defeat him, brought gems, pearls, and gold pieces by the thousands. The game started, destroying their anxiety. The game was filled with commotion, frightening and destructive to the wicked.

Text 61.29

śataṁ sahasram ayutaṁ rāmas tatrādade paṇam
taṁ tu rukmy ajayat tatra kāliṅgaḥ prāhasad balam
dantān sandarśayann uccair nāmṛṣyat tad dhalāyudhaḥ

In that match, Balarāma first accepted a wager of one hundred coins, then one thousand, then ten thousand. Rukmī won this first round, and the king of Kaliṅga laughed loudly at Balarāma, showing all his teeth. Balarāma could not tolerate this.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma first accepted a wager of one hundred coins, then one thousand, then ten thousand in the gambling match (tatra). When Rukmī defeated Balarāma, the king of Kāliṅga laughed loudly, conspicuously showing (san-darśayan) his teeth. Balarāma, famous for his prowess with his weapon, the plough, could not tolerate this. He became internally angry.

Text 61.30

tato lakṣaṁ rukmy agṛhṇād glahaṁ tatrājayad balaḥ
jitavān aham ity āha rukmī kaitavam āśritaḥ

Next Rukmī accepted a bet of one hundred thousand coins, which Balarāma won. But Rukmī tried to cheat, declaring "I'm the winner!"

COMMENTARY: Rukmī bet a hundred thousand to be given by the loser.

Text 61.31

manyunā kṣubhitaḥ śrīmān samudra iva parvaṇi
jātyāruṇākṣo 'ti-ruṣā nyarbudaṁ glaham ādade

Shaking with anger like the ocean on the full-moon day, handsome Balarāma, his naturally reddish eyes even redder in his fury, accepted a wager of one hundred million gold coins.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma was endowed with a wealth of glories (śrīmān). However, Śukadeva, remembering Balarāma's urge to kill the demon and also remembering his manifestation of special power, understood that, though he could not be agitated, sometimes he became dangerously agitated like the ocean. His naturally red eyes became even redder because of extreme anger.

Text 61.32

taṁ cāpi jitavān rāmo dharmeṇa chalam āśritaḥ
rukmī jitaṁ mayātreme vadantu prāśnikā iti

Balarāma fairly won this wager also, but Rukmī again resorted to cheating and declared, "I have won! Let these witnesses here say what they saw."

COMMENTARY: Balarāma won according to the rules (dharmeṇa). But in spite of his winning, Rukmī resorted to cheating.

Text 61.33

tadābravīn nabho-vāṇī balenaiva jito glahaḥ
dharmato vacanenaiva rukmī vadati vai mṛṣā

Just then a voice from the sky declared, "Balarāma has fairly won this wager according to the rules since he accepted the wager. Rukmī is surely lying."

COMMENTARY: Since the sinful kings would act as witnesses and tell a lie, a voice spoke from the sky in order to increase Balarāma's fury so that he would kill sinful Rukmī. Balarāma has won the wager according to the rules (dharmataḥ) because he made a statement (vacanena) that he would accept the bet. Rukmī speaks falsely. Viṣṇu Purāṇa describes Rukmī's words:

tvayokto 'yaṁ glahaḥ satyaṁ na mayaiṣo 'numoditaḥ
evaṁ tvayā ced vijitaṁ vijitaṁ na mayā katham

I do not accept it as true that you have won the wager. If you won, how is it that I did not win?

In Viṣṇu Purāṇa, the voice in the sky spoke as follows:

vijitaṁ baladevena rukmiṇā bhāṣitaṁ mṛṣā
anuktvāpi vacaḥ kiñcit kṛtam bhavati karmaṇā

The wager has been won by Balarāma. Rukmī speaks falsely. Even if words are not spoken, what is done is accomplished by the action.

Text 61.34

tām anādṛtya vaidarbho duṣṭa-rājanya-coditaḥ
saṅkarṣaṇaṁ parihasan babhāṣe kāla-coditaḥ

Urged on by the wicked kings, Rukmī ignored the divine voice. In fact destiny itself was urging Rukmī on, and thus he ridiculed Balarāma as

follows.

COMMENTARY: He ridiculed Balarāma who was capable of destroying everything immediately (saṅkarṣaṇam). Or he mocked the second member of Svayam Bhagavān's catur-vyūha.

Text 61.35

naivākṣa-kovidā yūyaṁ gopālā vana-gocarāḥ
akṣair dīvyanti rājāno bāṇaiś ca na bhavādṛśāḥ

[Rukmī said:] You cowherds who wander about the forests know nothing about dice. Playing with dice and sporting with arrows are only for kings, not for the likes of you.

COMMENTARY: Rukmī addressed Balarāma in the plural (yuyam—you) to indicate that Balarāma was an associate of Kṛṣṇa. You are ignorant because you are cowherds, of lower birth, who wander in the forest. However, there is a hidden meaning in those words by which he accidently praises Balarāma. You protect (pālāḥ) the cows and the earth (go). You are the objects of meditation (gocarāḥ) in solitary forests. But persons like you are not learned at gambling matches at all because only persons intoxicated with wealth (rājānaḥ) enjoy committing violence to others by arrows and gambling. This is not seen in you or your devotees. We do not know, but your devotees know your actions which are performed as your independent pastimes.

Text 61.36

rukmiṇaivam adhikṣipto rājabhiś copahāsitaḥ
kruddhaḥ parigham udyamya jaghne taṁ nṛmṇa-saṁsadi

Thus insulted by Rukmī and ridiculed by the kings, Balarāma was provoked to anger. In the midst of the auspicious wedding assembly, he raised his club and struck Rukmī dead.

COMMENTARY: Being mocked by the kings and Rukmī, so that even Kṛṣṇa was included in their derision, Balarāma killed him in the auspicious (nṛmṇa) assembly.

Text 61.37

kaliṅga-rājaṁ tarasā gṛhītvā daśame pade
dantān apātayat kruddho yo ’hasad vivṛtair dvijaiḥ

The king of Kaliṅga, who had laughed at Balarāma and shown his teeth, tried to run away, but the furious Lord quickly seized him on his tenth step and knocked out all his teeth.

COMMENTARY: The king of Kaliṅga fled ten steps in fear but Balarāma, because of his anger, knocked his teeth out since the king had laughed showing his teeth. “This wicked person desires great suffering for me. Why should I not fulfill his desire?” He then fulfilled the king’s desire by knocking out his teeth.

Text 61.38

anye nirbhinna-bāhūru-śiraso rudhirokṣitāḥ
rājāno dudravar bhītā balena parighārditāḥ

Tormented by Balarāma’s club, the other kings fled in fear, their arms, thighs and heads broken and their bodies drenched in blood.

COMMENTARY: He attacked the other kings with his club. He broke their limbs completely (nir-bhinna)—from arms to thighs to head. These were successively more serious injuries. They were soaked in blood. In great fear, they then fled.

Text 61.39

nihate rukmiṇi śyāle nābravīt sādhv asādhu vā
rukmiṇī-balayo rājan sneha-bhaṅga-bhayād dhariḥ

When his brother-in-law Rukmī was slain, Kṛṣṇa neither applauded nor protested, O King, for he feared jeopardizing his affectionate ties with either Rukmiṇī or Balarāma.

COMMENTARY: It was proper that Kṛṣṇa say that it was good that Rukmī died since he was evil. But he did not say that. He also did not say that it was wrong to kill a brother-in-law, since in saying Rukmī’s killing was good, he feared that Rukmiṇī would become angry with him, and his affectionate relationship with Rukmiṇī would be broken or would disappear (bhaṅga) and if he said killing Rukmī was wrong, Balarāma would be angry with him,

and his affectionate relationship with Balarāma would be broken. Thus if he did not say anything, the affection would continue.

Or, bhaṅga can mean crookedness, the appearance of anger in affection. Or bhaṅga can mean a wave. Kṛṣṇa feared that Rukmiṇī and Balarāma would waver in their affection for him. "How can I say the opposite to each of them?" Therefore he was silent out of shame (bhayāt). Or, he remained silent since Rukmiṇī would immediately become angry at Balarāma on realizing that Kṛṣṇa approved the killing. He feared the relationship between Rukmiṇī and Balarāma would be broken. In approving the killing he feared criticism from Rukmiṇī's family and the public, and humiliation of Rukmiṇī. Rukmī was a brother-in-law (śyāle). Kṛṣṇa was able to take away (hariḥ) the breaking of affection. He could create joy because of his skill. Previously when Kṛṣṇa disfigured Rukmī she spoke slightly harsh words to Kṛṣṇa. What would she say to him now when Rukmī was killed by Balarāma? Śukadeva addresses Parīkṣit with excitement. "O King!"

Text 61.40

tato 'niruddhaṁ saha sūryayā varaṁ
rathaṁ samāropya yayuḥ kuśasthalīm
rāmādayo bhojakaṭād daśārhāḥ
siddhākhilārthā madhusūdanāśrayāḥ

Then the descendants of Daśārha, headed by Balarāma, seated Aniruddha and his bride on a fine chariot and set off from Bhojakaṭa for Dvārakā. Having taken shelter of Madhusūdana, they had fulfilled all their purposes.

COMMENTARY: They placed the couple on the best chariot with music and singing (sam-āropya). For Balarāma particularly (mentioned first), all purposes were fulfilled because everyone approved of the killing of a wicked person and Kṛṣṇa maintained silence. The word Madhusūdana (killer of Madhu) indicated for Balarāma that Kṛṣṇa approved of his killing Rukmī. Just as Kṛṣṇa killed Madhu with cleverness because of his receiving a boon[1], Balarāma cleverly killed Rukmī, while appearing to be indifferent to playing dice.

[1] Madhu and Kaitava had the blessing of not being killed by anyone. They could only die if they desired it. Viṣṇu therefore asked them to choose a boon. They laughed, saying, “We are more powerful. Choose a boon from us.” Viṣṇu then asked for the benediction of killing them.

Chapter Sixty-two
The Meeting of Ūṣā and Aniruddha

Text 62.1

śrī-rājovāca
bāṇasya tanayām ūṣām upayeme yadūttamaḥ
tatra yuddham abhūd ghoraṁ hari-śaṅkarayor mahat
etat sarvaṁ mahā-yogin samākhyātuṁ tvam arhasi

King Parīkṣit said: The best of the Yadus married Bāṇāsura's daughter, Ūṣā, and as a result a great, fearsome battle occurred between Kṛṣṇa and Śiva. Please explain everything about this incident, O most powerful of mystics.

Text 62.2

śrī-śuka uvāca
bāṇaḥ putra-śata-jyeṣṭho baler āsīn mahātmanaḥ
yena vāmana-rūpāya haraye 'dāyi medinī
tasyaurasaḥ suto bānaḥ śiva-bhakti-rataḥ sadā
mānyo vadānyo dhīmāṁś ca satya-sandho dṛḍha-vrataḥ
śoṇitākhye pure ramye sa rājyam akarot purā
tasya śambhoḥ prasādena kiṅkarā iva te 'marāḥ
sahasra-bāhur vādyena tāṇḍave 'toṣayan mṛḍam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Bāṇa was the oldest of the hundred sons fathered by the great saint Bali Mahārāja, who gave the whole earth in charity to the Lord when he appeared as Vāmanadeva. Bāṇāsura, born from Bali's semen, became a great devotee of Śiva. His behavior was always respectable, and he was generous, intelligent, truthful and firm in his vows. The beautiful city of Śoṇitapura was under his dominion. Because Śiva had favored him, the devatās waited on Bāṇāsura like menial servants. Once, when Śiva was dancing, Bāṇa especially satisfied him by playing a musical accompaniment with his one thousand arms.

COMMENTARY: Bāṇa was the oldest of a hundred sons of the great devotee Bali. This implies that Bāṇa was not a devotee, the unavoidable result of

bad association with a sinful person who hated the Lord and committed offenses. The offense could not be destroyed even by worshiping Śiva, the great devotee of the Lord, endowed with the wealth of the earth. Rather, through Śiva's association, he tried to compete with the Lord. With his thousand arms, he was able to play the instruments very skillfully. The name mṛḍa means compassionate and happy. Because Śiva was compassionate he danced. His dancing was filled with devotion for the Supreme Lord.

Text 62.3

bhagavān sarva-bhūteśaḥ śaraṇyo bhakta-vatsalaḥ
vareṇa chandayām āsa sa taṁ vavre purādhipam

The lord and master of all created beings, the compassionate refuge of his devotees, gladdened Bāṇāsura by offering him the benediction of his choice. Bāṇa chose to have Śiva as the guardian of his city.

COMMENTARY: "Why did Śiva accept such a sinful person?" It is said Śiva by his nature is endowed with compassion as well as wealth and power. The faults of the sinful person sometimes are destroyed by a relationship with him. When Śiva was absorbed in the Lord while dancing, his mercy arose because of Bāṇa's music. That is explained in this verse. He asked Bāṇa to choose a gift (vareṇa chandayām āsa). He chose to have Śiva as the protector of his city.

Text 62.4

sa ekadāha giriśaṁ pārśva-sthaṁ vīrya-durmadaḥ
kirīṭenārka-varṇena saṁspṛśaṁs tat-padāmbujam

Bāṇāsura was intoxicated with his strength. One day, when Śiva was standing beside him, Bāṇāsura touched Śiva's lotus feet with his helmet, which shone like the sun, and spoke to him as follows.

COMMENTARY: A particular event is described. Śiva was by his side because he continually stayed with Bāṇa in his city as its protector. Hari-vaṁśa describes his thoughts with his minister:

deva-dānava-saṁghānāṁ yaḥ kartā bhuvana-prabhuḥ
sa bhavaḥ kārttikeyaś ca kṛtavāso hi naḥ pure

Śiva, the master of the world, the creator of all the devatās and demons and Kārtikeya is living in our city.

Instead of parśva-stham sometimes pārsvataḥ is seen. He was intoxicated with his strength. Śiva thought of giving him a benediction suitable to his evil nature when he was about to ask for a favor. By the mercy of Śiva he obtained great wealth such as his gold crown. He was intoxicated with that wealth. Bāṇa touched Śiva's feet with devotion (sam-spṛśan). That devotion was filled with rajas and tamas.

Text 62.5

namasye tvāṁ mahā-deva lokānāṁ gurum īśvaram
puṁsām apūrṇa-kāmānāṁ kāma-pūrāmarāṅghripam

[Bāṇāsura said:] O Mahādeva, I bow down to you, the spiritual master and controller of the worlds. You are like the heavenly tree that fulfills the desires of those whose desires are unfulfilled.

COMMENTARY: Bāṇa offered respects because Śiva was a great personality (mahādeva), the lord of all the devatās. He was moreover the giver of beneficial instructions to all jīvas (lokānāṁ gurum) and was their master (īśvaram). The goal of his offering respects is stated: he could fulfill the desires of all men. Therefore you should fulfill my desires also.

Text 62.6

doḥ-sahasraṁ tvayā dattaṁ paraṁ bhārāya me 'bhavat
tri-lokyāṁ pratiyoddhāraṁ na labhe tvad ṛte samam

These one thousand arms you bestowed upon me have become merely a heavy burden. Besides you, I find no one in the three worlds worthy to fight.

COMMENTARY: He reveals his pride with indirect speaking in two verses (6-7). Your benediction has only (param) become a burden since I can find no one in the three worlds to fight except for you. You are my equal, but I should not fight with you. My arms are a burden since they have no use.

Text 62.7

kaṇḍūtyā nibhṛtair dorbhir yuyutsur dig-gajān aham
ādyāyāṁ cūrṇayann adrīn bhītās te 'pi pradudruvuḥ

Eager to fight with the elephants who rule the directions, O primeval lord, I went forth, pulverizing mountains with my arms, which were itching for battle. But even those great elephants fled in fear.

COMMENTARY: He speaks of his grief in trying to use his arms so they would not be useless. The desire to fight was intolerable, like an itch. I desired to fight the elephants of the directions, the best of all elephants, but they fled. You alone are worthy of fighting with me, not others. You alone should fight with me. That is what Bāṇa hints. Thinking that others should serve him, the enemy of the Lord committed an offense against even the devatās. That is shown here.

Text 62.8

tac chrutvā bhagavān kruddhaḥ ketus te bhajyate yadā
tvad-darpa-ghnaṁ bhaven mūḍha saṁyugaṁ mat-samena te

Hearing this, Śiva became angry and replied, "Your flag will be broken, fool, when you have done battle with one who is my equal. That fight will vanquish your conceit."

COMMENTARY: Śiva, called bhagavān because he is the lord of past, present and future, then spoke (the verb is understood). You have spoken suitable to your nature. Your flag with the peacock emblem will break by itself. O fool! You do not know the accomplishment of your desire. By your pride you are choosing this. You will fight with my equal. "He will become astonished by my saying this much. What more need I indicate to him?" Sama actually means "with he who resides with (sa) Lakṣmī (ma)." That indicates Kṛṣṇa, who is the object of my (Śiva's) service, who is everything (sama) to me (mat).

Text 62.9

ity uktaḥ kumatir hṛṣṭaḥ sva-gṛhaṁ prāviśan nṛpa
pratīkṣan giriśādeśaṁ sva-vīrya-naśanam kudhīḥ

Thus advised, unintelligent Bāṇāsura was delighted. The fool then went home, O King, to wait for that which Śiva had predicted: the destruction

of his prowess.

COMMENTARY: When Śiva said this, Bāṇa was joyful because he was foolish, having bad discrimination. He waited for what Śiva had predicted, by which his power would be destroyed, and returned home, since he had bad intentions (kudhīḥ). According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, "He waited for the destruction of his powers" means "He waited for death." At that time his flag would be broken. Instead of naśanam sometimes nāśanam is seen. Viṣṇu Purāṇa describes this:

tataḥ praṇamya varadaṁ śaṁbhum abhyāgato gṛham
sabhagnaṁ dhvajam ālokya hṛṣṭo harṣaṁ punar yayau

Offering his respects to Śiva, the giver of boons, Bāṇa entered his house. Waiting for his flag to be broken, he rejoiced and rejoiced.

Hari-vaṁśa describes this similarly but also describes a conversation between Bāṇa and his minister Kumbhāṇḍa.

Text 62.10

tasyoṣā nāma duhitā svapne prādyumninā ratim
kanyālabhata kāntena prāg adṛṣṭa-śrutena sā

In a dream Bāṇa's daughter, the maiden Ūṣā, had an amorous encounter with the son of Pradyumna, though she had never before seen or heard of her lover.

COMMENTARY: She was a young girl. She was told by Pārvatī that this person would be her husband. Viṣṇu Purāṇa describes this:

ūṣā bāṇasutā vipra pārvatīṁ saha śaṁbhunā
krīḍantīm upalakṣyoccaiḥ spṛhāṁ cakre tadāśrayām
tataḥ sakala-cittajñā gaurī tām āha bhāminīm
alam atyartha-tāpena bhartrā tvam api raṁsyase
ity uktā sā tayā cakre kadeti matim ātmanaḥ
ko vā bhartā mam ety āha punas tām āha pārvatī
vaiśākha-śukla-dvādaśyāṁ svapne yo 'bhibhavaṁ tava
kariṣyati sa te bhartā raja-putri bhaviṣyati

O brāhmaṇa, when Ūṣā, the daughter of Bāṇa, happened to see Pārvatī playing with Śiva, Ūṣā intensely desired to experience the same feelings. At

that time Pārvatī, who knows everyone's heart, told the sensitive young girl, "Don't be so disturbed! You will have a chance to enjoy with your own husband." Hearing this, Ūṣā thought to herself, "But when? And who will my husband be?" In response, Pārvatī addressed her once more. "The man who approaches you in your dream on the twelfth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month Vaiśākha will become your husband, O princess!"

Text 62.11

sā tatra tam apaśyantī kvāsi kānteti vādinī
sakhīnāṁ madhya uttasthau vihvalā vrīḍitā bhṛśam

Losing sight of him in her dream, Ūṣā suddenly sat up in the midst of her girlfriends, crying out "Where are you, my lover?" She was greatly pained and embarrassed.

COMMENTARY: She was in great pain because of separation (vihvalāḥ), or overcome with fatigue after enjoyment with him. Then she became embarrassed. Hari-vaṁśa describes her condition:

sā svapne ramitā tena strī-bhāvaṁ cāpi lambhitā
śoṇitāktā prarudatī sahasaivotthitā niśi

Enjoying with him in a dream, she became overcome with womanly emotions. With red complexion, she wept and suddenly rose out of bed in the night.

It is understood that Aniruddha directly came to her. This was arranged by Citralekhā, as will be explained later. This and his later actions occurred from a display of human-like pastimes.

Text 62.12

bāṇasya mantrī kumbhāṇḍaś citralekhā ca tat-sutā
sakhy apṛcchat sakhīm ūṣāṁ kautūhala-samanvitā

Bāṇāsura had a minister named Kumbhāṇḍa, whose daughter was Citralekhā. A companion of Ūṣā's, she was filled with curiosity, and thus she inquired from her friend.

COMMENTARY: The friend asked her friend. This shows their faith in each other. Kumbhāṇḍa was Bāṇa's minister. Citralekhā was his daughter. The

word ca means “but” (to indicate a different topic). Citralekhā was curious because of Ūṣā’s words.

Text 62.13

kaṁ tvaṁ mṛgayase su-bhru kīdṛśas te manorathaḥ
hasta-grāhaṁ na te ’dyāpi rāja-putry upalakṣaye

[Citralekhā said:] Who are you searching for, O fine-browed one? What is this hankering you’re feeling? Until now, O princess, I haven’t seen any man take your hand in marriage.

COMMENTARY: Ūṣā said “Where are you?” Thus Citralekhā asks, “Who are you searching for?” Ūṣā also said “O my lover!” Thus, Citralekhā says that she has not been married yet.

Text 62.14

dṛṣṭaḥ kaścin naraḥ svapne śyāmaḥ kamala-locanaḥ
pīta-vāsā bṛhad-bāhur yoṣitāṁ hṛdayaṁ-gamaḥ

[Ūṣā said:] In my dream I saw a certain man who had a dark blue complexion, lotus eyes, yellow garments and mighty arms. He was the kind who touches women’s hearts.

COMMENTARY: Though not mentioned, it is understood that he was youthful, and thus was attractive to women.

Text 62.15

tam ahaṁ mṛgaye kāntaṁ pāyayitvādharaṁ madhu
kvāpi yātaḥ spṛhayatīṁ kṣiptvā māṁ vṛjinārṇave

It is that lover I search for. After making me drink the honey of his lips, he has gone elsewhere, and thus he has thrown me, with my desire still unfulfilled, into the ocean of distress.

COMMENTARY: He made me drink the honey of his lips. Though my desires were not fulfilled (spṛhayatīm), he left.

Text 62.16

citralekhovāca
vyasanaṁ te ’pakarṣāmi tri-lokyāṁ yadi bhāvyate
tam āneṣye varaṁ yas te mano-hartā tam ādiśa

Citralekhā said: I will remove your distress. If he is to be found anywhere in the three worlds, I will bring this future husband of yours who has stolen your heart. Please show me who he is by selecting the picture.

COMMENTARY: Citralekhā speaks in the present tense (apakarṣāmi) to indicate that very quickly she will remove Ūṣā’s distress. If his picture that I draw can be pointed out by you, I will bring him. Seeing the pictures, point out the person.

Text 62.17

ity uktvā deva-gandharva siddha-cāraṇa-pannagān
daitya-vidyādharān yakṣān manujāṁś ca yathālikhat

Saying this, Citralekhā proceeded to draw accurate pictures of various devatās, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Pannagas, Daityas, Vidyādharas, Yakṣas and humans.

COMMENTARY: According to Ūṣā’s description Citralekhā drew other men in order to show her power of omniscience. This instilled faith in Ūṣā. She even drew pictures of yogīs since there innumerable numbers of powerful entities in the universe.

Text 62.18–19

manujeṣu ca sā vṛṣnīn śūram ānakadundubhim
vyalikhad rāma-kṛṣṇau ca pradyumnaṁ vīkṣya lajjitā
aniruddhaṁ vilikhitaṁ vīkṣyoṣāvāṅ-mukhī hriyā
so ’sāv asāv iti prāha smayamānā mahī-pate

O King, among the humans, Citralekhā drew pictures of the Vṛṣṇis, including Śūrasena, Vasudeva, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. When Ūṣā saw the picture of Pradyumna she became bashful, and when she saw Aniruddha’s picture she bent her head down in embarrassment. Smiling, she exclaimed, “He’s the one! It’s he!”

COMMENTARY: She particularly drew the Vṛṣṇis among the humans. Ūṣā had described her lover as a human (verse 14). Because she also mentioned

that he was dark in complexion, she drew Pradyumna since he was a great possibility among them. Seeing his picture Ūṣā was embarrassed because of her nature. Seeing Aniruddha's picture, she bowed her head in more intense shame. There are different degrees of embarrassment, involving contraction and expansion of consciousness and eyes. She spoke with choked voice (pra-āha). The skilful drawings of Citralekhā and recognition by Ūṣā are not possible anywhere on earth. You should know this since you are lord of the earth, O Parīkṣit (mahī-pate).

Text 62.20

citralekhā tam ājñāya pautraṁ kṛṣṇasya yoginī
yayau vihāyasā rājan dvārakāṁ kṛṣṇa-pālitām

Citralekhā, endowed with mystic powers, recognized him as Kṛṣṇa's grandson [Aniruddha]. My dear King, she then traveled by the mystic skyway to Dvārakā, the city under Kṛṣṇa's protection.

COMMENTARY: She had special powers by her nature (yoginī). Or, according to Hari-vaṁśa, she attained her powers from Nārada. Since she was afraid of the Lord, Nārada consoled her and said:

gṛhyatāṁ tāmasī vidyā sarva-loka-pramohinī
kṛta-kṛtyām tato daiteyī eṣa vidyāṁ dadāmy aham

Take this tamasic knowledge which bewilders the whole world. O descendent of Diti! I give you this accomplished knowledge.

She was actually protected by the Lord. All this happened by the will of the Lord. O King! Shining with intelligence, you should understand such powers.

Text 62.21

tatra suptaṁ su-paryaṅke prādyumniṁ yogam āsthitā
gṛhītvā śoṇita-puraṁ sakhyai priyam adarśayat

There she found Pradyumna's son Aniruddha sleeping upon a fine bed. With her yogic power she took him away to Śoṇitapura, where she presented her girlfriend Ūṣā with her beloved.

COMMENTARY: Citralekhā showed her friend her lover.

Text 62.22

sā ca taṁ sundara-varaṁ vilokya muditānanā
duṣprekṣye sva-gṛhe pumbhī reme prādyumninā samam

When Ūṣā beheld him, the most beautiful of men, her face lit up with joy. She took the son of Pradyumna to her private quarters, which men were forbidden even to see, and there enjoyed with him.

COMMENTARY: Her face blossomed with joy. Because of her joy, she could not conceal anything.

Text 62.23–24

parārdhya-vāsaḥ-srag-gandha-dhūpa-dīpāsanādibhiḥ
pāna-bhojana-bhakṣyaiś ca vākyaiḥ śuśrūṣaṇārcitaḥ
gūḍhaḥ kanyā-pure śaśvat-pravṛddha-snehayā tayā
nāhar-gaṇān sa bubudhe ūṣayāpahṛtendriyaḥ

Ūṣā worshiped Aniruddha with faithful service, offering him priceless garments, along with garlands, fragrances, incense, lamps, sitting places and so on. She also offered him beverages, all types of food, and sweet words. As he thus remained hidden in the young ladies' quarters, Aniruddha did not notice the passing of the days, for his senses were captivated by Ūṣā, whose affection for him ever increased.

COMMENTARY: She offered foods which were chewed, drunk, sucked and licked (pāna-bhojana). The words actually mean peya and bhojya. It takes the meaning according to kṛtya-lyuṭo bahulam. (Pāṇini 3.3.113) She worshipped him devotedly with these items. She had anurāga which increased in newer ways (pra-vṛddha) again and again. Because of that, he was not aware of the passage of time. He was able to leave Kṛṣṇa and stay there a long time because it was Kṛṣṇa's will, for certain pastimes. His senses were captured by Ūṣā. This means he was bewildered by prema.

Text 62.25–26

tāṁ tathā yadu-vīreṇa bhujyamānāṁ hata-vratām
hetubhir lakṣayāṁ cakrur āprītāṁ duravacchadaiḥ
bhaṭā āvedayāṁ cakrū rājaṁs te duhitur vayam
viceṣṭitaṁ lakṣayāma kanyāyāḥ kula-dūṣaṇam

The guards eventually noticed unmistakable symptoms of romantic involvement in Ūṣā, who, having broken her maiden vow, was being enjoyed by the Yadu hero and showing signs of conjugal happiness. The guards went to Bāṇāsura and told him, "O King, we have detected in your daughter the kind of improper behavior that spoils the reputation of a young girl's family.

COMMENTARY: She was enjoyed by him. He had no fear and was the most clever. She had broken her vows of chastity. The guards saw the symptoms. "What were the symptoms?" They could not be concealed. Signs of love making were noticed. The main sign was that she was so joyful (āprītām). Bhaṭāḥ means eunuchs and other guards within the palace.

Text 62.27

anapāyibhir asmābhir guptāyāś ca gṛhe prabho
kanyāyā dūṣaṇaṁ pumbhir duṣprekṣyāyā na vidmahe

"We have been carefully watching over her, never leaving our posts, O master, so we cannot understand how this maiden, whom no man can even see, has been corrupted within the palace."

COMMENTARY: They absolve themselves of blame and speak to clear doubts about themselves. Instead of duṣprekṣyāyā sometimes duṣprekṣāyā is seen. We cannot perceive directly or even infer how she can be contaminated. The plural is used (pumbhiḥ—by men) to denote the singular according to the rule jāty ākhyāyām ekasmin bahuvacanam anyatarasyām. (Pāṇini 1.2.58)

Text 62.28

tataḥ pravyathito bāṇo duhituḥ śruta-dūṣaṇaḥ
tvaritaḥ kanyakāgāraṁ prāpto 'drākṣīd yadūdvaham

Very agitated to hear of his daughter's corruption, Bāṇāsura rushed at once to the maidens' quarters. There he saw the pride of the Yadus, Aniruddha.

COMMENTARY: He came to her quarters secretly (pra-āptaḥ) and saw the best of the Yadus.

Text 62.29–30

kāmātmajaṁ taṁ bhuvanaika-sundaraṁ
śyāmaṁ piśaṅgāmbaram ambujekṣaṇam
bṛhad-bhujaṁ kuṇḍala-kuntala-tviṣā
smitāvalokena ca maṇḍitānanam
dīvyantam akṣaiḥ priyayābhinṛmṇayā
tad-aṅga-saṅga-stana-kuṅkuma-srajam
bāhvor dadhānaṁ madhu-mallikāśritāṁ
tasyāgra āsīnam avekṣya vismitaḥ

Bāṇāsura saw before him Cupid's own son, possessed of unrivaled beauty, with dark-blue complexion, yellow garments, lotus eyes and formidable arms. His face was adorned with effulgent earrings and hair, and also with smiling glances. As he sat opposite his most auspicious lover, playing with her at dice, there hung between his arms a garland of spring jasmines that had been smeared with kuṅkuma powder from her breasts when he had embraced her. Bāṇāsura was astonished to see all this.

COMMENTARY: Two verses describe Aniruddha. His beauty is described. He was playing dice fearlessly. This shows his charming nature. His garland was smeared with the kuṅkuma from her breasts. This shows the auspicious clothing of a married person. He had a garland of the best jasmines, flowing with honey. The monsoon months had come, as will be mentioned later. He was sitting in front of Bāṇa. He did not stand up since he was unafraid. Bāṇa was astonished by his beauty and fearlessness in his presence.

Text 62.31

sa taṁ praviṣṭaṁ vṛtam ātatāyibhir
bhaṭair anīkair avalokya mādhavaḥ
udyamya maurvaṁ parighaṁ vyavasthito
yathāntako daṇḍa-dharo jighāṁsayā

Seeing Bāṇāsura enter with many armed guards, Aniruddha raised his iron club and stood resolute, ready to strike anyone who attacked him. He resembled death personified holding his rod of punishment.

COMMENTARY: Bāṇa ordered the guards who were nearby to seize Aniruddha since he was ashamed and had disrespect for Aniruddha. Maurvam should actually be mauravam. Aniruddha stood there showing indifference to Bāṇa as well as courage (vy-avasthitaḥ), and displayed a ferocious nature. The metaphor illustrates this.

Text 62.32

jighṛkṣayā tān paritaḥ prasarpataḥ
śuno yathā śūkara-yūthapo 'hanat
te hanyamānā bhavanād vinirgatā
nirbhinna-mūrdhoru-bhujāḥ pradudruvuḥ

As the guards converged on him from all sides, trying to capture him, Aniruddha struck them just as the leader of a pack of boars strikes back at dogs. Hit by his blows, the guards fled her quarters, running for their lives with shattered heads, thighs and arms.

COMMENTARY: Desiring to capture him, they surrounded him. But they could not. He struck them with his club and they fled from Ūṣā's quarters.

Text 62.33

taṁ nāga-pāśair bali-nandano balī
ghnantaṁ sva-sainyaṁ kupito babandha ha
ūṣā bhṛśaṁ śoka-viṣāda-vihvalā
baddhaṁ niśamyāśru-kalākṣy arautsīt

But even as Aniruddha was striking down the army of Bāṇa, that powerful son of Bali angrily caught him with the mystic nāga-pāśa ropes. When Ūṣā heard of Aniruddha's capture, she was overwhelmed with grief and depression; her eyes filled with tears, and she wept.

COMMENTARY: Though he was the son of Bali, who should have given joy to Bali, he gave grief to Bali. This is like using the word maṅgala (auspicious) to denote the inauspicious (Mars is called maṅgala). By the will of the Lord he was now the opposite. Vidura asked the questions:

apisvid āste bhagavān sukhaṁ vo
yaḥ sātvatāṁ kāma-dugho 'niruddhaḥ

yam āmananti sma hi śabda-yoniṁ
mano-mayaṁ sattva-turīya-tattvam

How is Aniruddha, the fulfiller of all desires of the devotees, whom the sages call the source of the Vedas, who instigates action of the mind, who is composed of śuddha-sattva and who is the fourth member of the catur-vyūha? SB 3.1.34

He is called the source of the Vedas (śabda-yonim). The Vedas are his breathing. He is worshipped as the mind (manomayam), just as Vāsudeva is worshipped as citta. He is the Lord, composed of śuddha-sattva. He is the fourth member of the catur-vyūha. In Viṣṇu Dharmottara it is said:

kas tv asau kāla-rūpeṇa kalpānteṣu punah punaḥ
dṛṣṭo yo na tvayā jñātas tatra kautūhalaṁ mama

Who is this person with the form of time at the end of the kalpa, whom you look at again and again and recognize? I am curious about this.

Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa says:

bhūyo bhūyas tv asau dṛṣṭo mayā devo jagat-patiḥ
kalpa-kṣaye na vijñātaḥ sa māyā-mohitena vai
kalā-kṣaye vyatīte tu taṁ devaṁ prapitāmahāt
aniruddha vijāmāmi pitaraṁ te jagat-patim

The Lord of the universe seen by me again and again at the end of the kalpa was unknown to me, since I was covered by illusion. When the destruction at the end of the kalpa ended, I understood from Brahmā that the Lord of the universe is your father, Aniruddha. Viṣṇu-dharmottara 1.79.2-3

It is said in Padma Purāṇa:

aniruddho bṛhaḍ brahma pradyumir viśva-mohanaḥ
caturātmā catur-varṇaś catur-yuga-vidhāyakaḥ
catur bhedaika-viśvātmā sarvotkṛṣṭāṁśa-koṭisuḥ

Aniruddha is the great Brahman, the son of Pradyumna, the enchanter of the universe. He has four forms, four colors and appears in the four yugas. He has four forms but is the one soul of the universe and gives rise to millions of attractive expansions.

rohiṇī-tanayo rāma a-kārākśara-saṁbhavaḥ
taijasātmakaḥ pradyumna u-kārākśara-saṁbhavaḥ
prājñātmako'niruddho'sau ma-kārākśara-saṁbhavaḥ
ardha-mātrātmakaḥ kṛṣṇo yasmin viśvaṁ pratiṣṭhitam

Balarāma gives rise to the syllable a. Pradyumna, in charge of dreaming, gives rise to the syllable u. Aniruddha, in charge of deep sleep, gives rise to the syllable m. Kṛṣṇa in whom the universe is established is the candra bindu. Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad

Thus Aniruddha as an expansion of Kṛṣṇa is supreme. Instead of balī sometimes balinam is seen. According to Hari-vaṁśa, Bāṇa was defeated in fighting using spears. Since he could not fight Aniruddha directly, Bāṇa tied him up using the weapons of the snakes by trickery. Viṣṇu Purāṇa says:

yudhyamāno yathāśakti yadu-vīreṇa nirjitaḥ
māyayā yuyudhe tena sa tadā mantricoditaḥ

Fighting as hard as he could, he was defeated by Aniruddha. Bāṇa, advised by his ministers, then fought using illusions.

Hearing the news, Ūṣā lamented. The battle took place outside and she was within her room. Another version has niśāmya instead of niśamya. Hari-vaṁśa says nagair viceṣṭataṁ dṛṣṭvā ūṣā prādymnim āturāḥ: seeing what the snakes did, Ūṣā lamented for Aniruddha. Her eyes flowed with tears and she cried. The proper verb is arodīt. Araudiṣīt or arautsīt is poetic license.

Chapter Sixty-three
Lord Kṛṣṇa Fights with Bāṇāsura

Text 63.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
apaśyatāṁ cāniruddhaṁ tad-bandhūnāṁ ca bhārata
catvāro vārṣikā māsā vyatīyur anuśocatām

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O descendant of Bharata, the relatives of Aniruddha, not seeing him return, continued to lament after the four rainy months passed.

COMMENTARY: The word ca means "but." This indicates a change of subject. All the Yadus (bandhūnām) and their male and female servants (indicated by second ca) continually lamented (anu-śocatām). Four months of the monsoon completely passed (vi-atīyuh). This means it was now Mārgaśīrṣa (December). After Ūṣā's dream which occurred on the Dvādaśī during the waxing phase of Vaiśākha month, Aniruddha was brought to her on the first days of Jyeṣṭha month, according to Citralekhā's words in Hari-vaṁśa. Sapta-rātreṇa te bhīru darśayiṣyāmy ahaṁ priyam: I will show you your beloved in seven nights' time. Six months passed, including even the four months of the monsoon. The first ca can also mean "and the four months of the monsoon passed." Thus the Yadus began to worry more. O best of the Bharata clan! You were born in the Pāṇḍava family. You know that the pastimes of the Lord do not go in vain.

Text 63.2

nāradāt tad upākarṇya vārtāṁ baddhasya karma ca
prayayuḥ śoṇita-puraṁ vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-daivatāḥ

After hearing from Nārada the news of Aniruddha's deeds and his capture, the Vṛṣṇis, who worshiped Kṛṣṇa as their personal deity, went to Śoṇitapura.

COMMENTARY: Tad refers to Aniruddha. Properly it should be tasya but for metrical reasons it is tad. They heard closely, secretly, the news (upa-

karṇya). They went to Śoṇitapura with great zeal (pra-yayuḥ). Kṛṣṇa was Aniruddha's grandfather and Svayam Bhagavān. He was the most worshipable by the Yadus (kṛṣṇa-daivatāḥ). This means that they did not have fear. This also means that Kṛṣṇa went, since they followed him.

Text 63.3–4

pradyumno yuyudhānaś ca gadaḥ sāmbo 'tha sāraṇaḥ
nandopananda-bhadrādyā rāma-kṛṣṇānuvartinaḥ
akṣauhiṇībhir dvādaśabhiḥ sametāḥ sarvato diśam
rurudhur bāṇa-nagaraṁ samantāt sātvatarṣabhāḥ

With Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa in the lead, the chiefs of the Sātvata clan—Pradyumna, Sātyaki, Gada, Sāmba, Sāraṇa, Nanda, Upananda, Bhadra and others—converged with an army of twelve divisions and laid siege to Bāṇasura's capital, completely surrounding the city on all sides.

COMMENTARY: The word atha indicates that they all followed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Nanda, Upananda and Bhadra were members of the Yadu dynasty. They brought their troops together out of affection (sam-etāḥ) and surrounded the city completely (samantāt).

Text 63.5

bhajyamāna-purodyāna-prākārāṭṭāla-gopuram
prekṣamāṇo ruṣāviṣṭas tulya-sainyo 'bhiniryayau

Bāṇāsura became filled with anger upon seeing them destroy his city's suburban gardens, ramparts, watchtowers and gateways, and thus he went out to confront them with an army of equal size.

COMMENTARY: Seeing astutely (while counting the enemy troops) his gardens being destroyed, he went out, facing them (abhi-niryayau), with an equal number of troops. He had more troops, but to show he would fight justly out of great pride, he brought only the same number of troops to fight.

Text 63.6

bāṇārthe bhagavān rudraḥ sa-sutaḥ pramathair vṛtaḥ
āruhya nandi-vṛṣabhaṁ yuyudhe rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ

Rudra, accompanied by his son Kārtikeya and the Pramathas, came riding on Nandi, his bull carrier, to fight Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa on Bāṇa's behalf.

COMMENTARY: Śiva fought on Bāṇa's behalf to show Bāṇa's fault of bad association. Another version has bāṇārtham. Śiva, being omniscient (bhagavān), knew Kṛṣṇa's powers. He fought to show to Bāṇa and others Kṛṣṇa's powers by his own defeat.

Text 63.7

āsīt su-tumulaṁ yuddham adbhutaṁ roma-harṣaṇam
kṛṣṇa-śaṅkarayo rājan pradyumna-guhayor api

A most astonishing, tumultuous and hair-raising battle then commenced, with Kṛṣṇa matched against Śiva, and Pradyumna against Kārtikeya.

COMMENTARY: The fighting was very congested (su-tumulam), astonishing, and hair-raising. Even hearing about it would make the hairs stand on end. First, a general description of the pairs of combatants is listed. Details of the fight are given later.

Text 63.8

kumbhāṇḍa-kūpakarṇābhyāṁ balena saha saṁyugaḥ
sāmbasya bāṇa-putreṇa bāṇena saha sātyakeḥ

Balarāma fought with Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa, Sāmba with Bāṇa's son, and Sātyaki with Bāṇa.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma was paired with Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa.

Text 63.9

brahmādayaḥ surādhīśā munayaḥ siddha-cāraṇāḥ
gandharvāpsaraso yakṣā vimānair draṣṭum āgaman

Brahmā and the other ruling devatās, along with Siddhas, Cāraṇas and great sages, as well as Gandharvas, Apsarās and Yakṣas, all came in their celestial airplanes to watch.

COMMENTARY: Brahmā is mentioned first since he was the head of the devatās. The list is from greater to lesser beings.

Text 63.10–11

śaṅkarānucarān śaurir bhūta-pramatha-guhyakān
ḍākinīr yātudhānāṁś ca vetālān sa-vināyakān
preta-mātṛ-piśācāṁś ca kuṣmāṇḍān brahma-rākṣasān
drāvayām āsa tīkṣṇāgraiḥ śaraiḥ śārṅga-dhanuś-cyutaiḥ

With sharp-pointed arrows discharged from his bow Śārṅga, Kṛṣṇa drove away the various followers of Śiva—Bhūtas, Pramathas, Guhyakas, Ḍākinīs, Yātudhānas, Vetālas, Vināyakas, Pretas, Mātās, Piśācas, Kuṣmāṇḍas and Brahma-rākṣasas.

COMMENTARY: Another version has bhūta-mātṛ-piśācān. But this would be repetition since bhūta-pramatha-guhyakān is found in the previous verse. The mothers of the bhūtas are persons other than the Pārvatī and mothers of the devatās. Kṛṣṇa drove them away with arrows shot from the Śārṅga bow, but did not kill them since they were the followers of his devotee Śiva. This shows his great mercy.

Text 63.12

pṛthag-vidhāni prāyuṅkta piṇāky astrāṇi śārṅgiṇe
praty-astraiḥ śamayām āsa śārṅga-pāṇir avismitaḥ

Śiva, wielder of the trident, shot various weapons at Kṛṣṇa, wielder of Śārṅga. But Kṛṣṇa was not in the least perplexed: he neutralized all these weapons with appropriate counterweapons.

COMMENTARY: They used weapons like the brahmāstra, shooting them separately. They both used bows, fighting according to the rules. Kṛṣṇa shot his arrows casually (avismitaḥ).

Text 63.13

brahmāstrasya ca brahmāstraṁ vāyavyasya ca pārvatam
āgneyasya ca pārjanyaṁ naijaṁ pāśupatasya ca

Kṛṣṇa counteracted a brahmāstra with another brahmāstra, a wind weapon with a mountain weapon, a fire weapon with a rain weapon, and Śiva's personal pāśupatāstra weapon with his own personal weapon, the nārāyaṇāstra.

COMMENTARY: When Śiva used a brahmāstra, Kṛṣṇa also used a brahmāstra. The verb is in the previous verse. Naijam means “his own.”

Text 63.14

mohayitvā tu giriśaṁ jṛmbhaṇāstreṇa jṛmbhitam
bāṇasya pṛtanāṁ śaurir jaghānāsi-gadeṣubhiḥ

After making Śiva faint by making him yawn with a yawning weapon, Kṛṣṇa proceeded to strike down Bāṇāsura’s army with his sword, club and arrows.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa made Śiva faint with his yawning weapon. Hari-vaṁśa says:

sa-śaraḥ sa-dhanuś caiva haras tenāśu jṛmbhitaḥ
saṁjñāṁ na lebhe bhagavān vijetāsura-rakṣasām

Śiva, still holding his arrows and bow, suddenly yawned and lost consciousness because of the Lord’s weapon. The Lord was the conqueror of the demons.

The sword, the club and arrows are progressively more effective at a distance.

Text 63.15

skandaḥ pradyumna-bāṇaughair ardyamānaḥ samantataḥ
asṛg vimuñcan gātrebhyaḥ śikhināpakramad raṇāt

Kārtikeya was distressed by the flood of Pradyumna’s arrows raining down from all sides, and thus he fled the battlefield on his peacock as blood poured from his limbs.

COMMENTARY: Having described Kṛṣṇa’s victory, now Śukadeva describes other victories of his followers in two verses (15-16).

Text 63.16

kumbhāṇḍa-kūpakarṇaś ca petatur muṣalārditau
dudruvus tad-anīkani hata-nāthāni sarvataḥ

Kumbhāṇḍa and Kūpakarṇa, tormented by Balarāma’s club, fell down dead. When the soldiers of these two demons saw that their leaders had

been killed, they scattered in all directions.

COMMENTARY: It should be understood that Bāṇa's son was defeated by Sāmba.

Text 63.17

viśīryamāṇam sva-balaṁ dṛṣṭvā bāṇo 'ty-amarṣitaḥ
kṛṣṇam abhyadravat saṅkhye rathī hitvaiva sātyakim

Bāṇāsura was furious to see his entire military force being torn apart. Leaving his fight with Sātyaki, he charged across the battlefield on his chariot and attacked Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: Seeing his army (balam) scattered, Bāṇa left his fight with Sātyaki and attacked Kṛṣṇa.

Text 63.18

dhanūṁṣy ākṛṣya yugapad bāṇaḥ pañca-śatāni vai
ekaikasmin śarau dvau dvau sandadhe raṇa-durmadaḥ

Proud on the battlefield, Bāṇa simultaneously pulled taut all the strings of his five hundred bows and fixed two arrows on each string.

COMMENTARY: Being proud on the battlefield (raṇa-durmadaḥ) he shot his arrows.

Text 63.19

tāni ciccheda bhagavān dhanūṁsi yugapad dhariḥ
sārathiṁ ratham aśvāṁś ca hatvā śaṅkham apūrayat

Kṛṣṇa split every one of Bāṇāsura's bows simultaneously, and also struck down his charioteer, chariot and horses. The Lord then sounded his conch.

COMMENTARY: Bāṇa's bows broke simultaneously on contact with Kṛṣṇa's arrows. This was Kṛṣṇa's pastime since he was endowed with all powers (bhagavān). He then destroyed the charioteer, chariot and horses. Thus he was called Hari, one who destroys (saṁharati).

Text 63.20

tan-mātā koṭarā nāma nagnā makta-śiroruhā
puro ʼvatasthe kṛṣṇasya putra-prāṇa-rirakṣayā

Just then Bāṇāsura's mother, Koṭarā, desiring to save her son's life, appeared before Kṛṣṇa naked and with her hair undone.

COMMENTARY: According to Hari-vaṁśa, Bāṇa became Śiva's son by great austerities. Because the mother was thus considered to be like Pārvatī she was called Koṭarā, another form of Pārvatī. In Hari-vaṁśa she is famous as Koṭarī. Śiva said, "Please save him, O Pārvatī. Go quickly to save Bāṇa without delay."

kṛṣṇasyaikasya tad rūpaṁ darśayat pārśvam āgatā
antardhānam upāgamya tyaktvā sā vāsasī punaḥ
paritrāṇāya bāṇasya vijayādhiṣṭhitā tataḥ
pramukhe vāsudevasya digvāsāḥ koṭavī sthitā

She came close to Kṛṣṇa in her form. Giving up invisibility, she appeared before him while wearing clothing. In order to protect Bāṇa she then stood there facing Kṛṣṇa, without clothing.

Koṭarī is another name of Bāṇa's mother. According to Viṣṇu Purāṇa however Koṭarī is the name of devatā of the demons who possessed powerful mantras. Nāmnā daiteya-vidyābhūt koḍarī purato hareḥ: Koṭarī, who had demonic knowledge, appeared before Kṛṣṇa. She is also called Koṭavī. Another version has rirakṣiṣayā instead of rirakṣayā.

Text 63.21

tatas tiryaṅ-mukho nagnām anirīkṣan gadāgrajaḥ
bāṇaś ca tāvad virathaś chinna-dhanvāviśat puram

Gadāgraja turned his face away to avoid seeing the naked woman, and Bāṇāsura—deprived of his chariot, his bow shattered—took the opportunity to flee into his city.

COMMENTARY: Gada, Kṛṣṇa's younger brother, also had such powers, what to speak of Kṛṣṇa having those powers.

Text 63.22

vidrāvite bhūta-gaṇe jvaras tu trī-śirās trī-pāt
abhyadhāvata dāśārhaṁ dahann iva diśo daśa

After Śiva's followers had been driven away, the Śiva-jvara, who had three heads and three feet, pressed forward to attack Kṛṣṇa. As the Śiva-jvara approached, he seemed to burn everything in the ten directions.

COMMENTARY: Jvara rushed forward to fight (the last phrase is understood but not stated in the text). Citsukha says that "Jvara fought" should be added to the verse. The bhūtas were driven away previously when Śiva fought. Or, because they fled, Jvara came. Hari-vaṁśa says:

jvaras tri-padas tri-śirāḥ ṣaḍ-bhujo nava-locanaḥ
bhasma-praharaṇo raudraḥ kālāntaka-yamopamaḥ
nadan megha-sahasrasya tulya-nirghata-nisvanaḥ
niḥśvasan jṛmbhanāṇs ca nidrān vitatanur bhṛśam

The terrible Śiva-jvara had three legs, three heads, six arms and nine eyes. Showering ashes, he resembled Yamarāja at the time of universal annihilation. He breathed like a hurricane and roared like a thousand clouds. By yawning he spread sleep everywhere.

Text 63.23

atha nārāyaṇaḥ devaḥ taṁ dṛṣṭvā vyasṛjaj jvaram
māheśvaro vaiṣṇavaś ca yuyudhāte jvarāv ubhau

Seeing this personified weapon approach, Kṛṣṇa then released his own personified fever weapon, the Viṣṇu-jvara. The Śiva-jvara and Viṣṇu-jvara thus battled each other.

COMMENTARY: There is also another slightly different version of the verse. Immediately (atha) Kṛṣṇa released his own weapon in a special manner (visṛjān)—something more powerful than Śiva's weapon. This was for play. The Lord is described as deva—he who plays, since he can even create the universe just by his will in the form of Nārāyaṇa.

Text 63.24

māheśvaraḥ samākrandan vaiṣṇavena balārditaḥ
alabdhvābhayam anyatra bhīto māheśvaro jvaraḥ
śaraṇārthī hṛṣīkeśaṁ tuṣṭāva prayatāñjaliḥ

The Śiva-jvara, overwhelmed by the strength of the Viṣṇu-jvara, cried out in pain. But finding no refuge, the frightened Śiva-jvara approached Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses, hoping to attain his shelter. Thus with joined palms he began to praise the Lord.

COMMENTARY: Wailing loudly (samākrandan), the Śiva-jvara fought. Then he became afflicted by the strength of Viṣṇu-jvara. Not finding fearlessness elsewhere, wherever he went in fear, he was followed by Viṣṇu-jvara, like Durvasā being followed by Sudarśaṇa. He went everywhere in the mood of surrender, asking "Please protect me" but no one could save him from fear. Then, fearful, desiring protection or shelter (śaraṇārthī), he folded his hands, being purified by devotion, or enthusiastic with devotion (prayata) and praised the Lord. Another version has praṇata: bowing with devotion. Kṛṣṇa was master of his senses. He thought compassionately of him. "Śiva-jvara, afflicted by me, is now surrendering to me."

Text 63.25

jvara uvāca
namāmi tvānanta-śaktiṁ pareśam
sarvātmānaṁ kevalaṁ jñapti-mātram
viśvotpatti-sthāna-saṁrodha-hetuṁ
yat tad brahma brahma-liṅgam praśāntam

The Śiva-jvara said: I bow down to you of unlimited potencies, the Supreme Lord, the Supersoul of all beings. You possess pure and complete consciousness and are the cause of cosmic creation, maintenance and dissolution. Perfectly peaceful, you are the Absolute Truth to whom the Vedas indirectly refer.

COMMENTARY: Even Śiva had begun to yawn because of Kṛṣṇa's weapon. Understanding that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Lord, Śiva-jvara then turned and approached him. He began praising Kṛṣṇa, indicating that he was worthy of surrender and worthy of praise, and offered respects. Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that the Lord has unlimited śakti because he is the master of Brahmā and others. This is because he is the giver of consciousness to all beings (sarvātman). This is because he is pure consciousness alone (kevalaṁ jñapti-mātram). He is the Supreme Lord because he gives

consciousness to all others, and because he is also the creator of the universe.

The meaning is this. Ātmā is pure consciousness and the giver of consciousness. From that consciousness arises inert prakṛti. That consciousness gives it power and that consciousness controls prakṛti. As the jīva in the material world, that consciousness takes up individual locations and as the Paramātmā it pervades everywhere. Therefore the five gross elements do not arise without you. Śruti says nāre bhīṣāsmād vātaḥ pavate: the wind out of fear of the Lord blows. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.8) Eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ: the one Lord resides deep within all beings. (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad)

The Lord has unlimited śaktis and is the controller of Brahmā and others. The Lord was defined in relation to the individual components of the universe. Then he is described in relation to the whole. He is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of the universe. (The Lord is Brahman as indicated by the Vedas.) He is without change or peaceful (praśāntam).

Śrīdhara Svāmī says that because he is without change, he cannot be directly described. The meaning is this. The products of change are perceived by everyone since they arise from our realization. Scripture also can be understood directly. That which does not transform however, cannot be directly understood, since it is different from what we normally experience. It can be somewhat suggested by scripture.

“Brahman is without qualities. I however have qualities since I have a form.” Brahman is your form (liṅgam), which is revealed by that pure Brahman, which also reveals your qualities, manifesting them through your svarūpa-śakti. Or you are described (liṅgam) by the Vedas (brahma). Or you have the characteristics of Brahman, realized by the wise since you are completely without change (pra-śāntam) or since you have a form of peaceful happiness.

Text 63.26

kālo daivaṁ karma jīvaḥ svabhāvo
dravyaṁ kṣetraṁ prāṇa ātmā vikāraḥ

tat-saṅghāto bīja-roha-pravāhas
tvan-māyaiṣā tan-niṣedhaṁ prapadye

Time, the agitator; fate; action, or cause; the conditioned jīva; impressions; the sense objects; the prakṛti; mahat-tattva; false ego; the eleven senses and five gross elements; the body—all this constitutes your material illusory energy, māyā, an endless cycle like that of seed and plant. I take shelter of you, the negation of this māyā.

COMMENTARY: After offering respects, in order to surrender, he describes the Lord as the shelter of everything and uncontaminated by the faults of matter since he is pure consciousness, etc., as described in the previous verse. After describing the Lord in this way, he surrenders. Kṣetram can mean prakṛti or the body. However, taking the word to mean body would be repetitious. Jīva here refers to the jīva with upādhis. All of these are the play of your external energy (tvan-māyā). I take shelter of you since I am covered by māyā.

Text 63.27

nānā-bhāvair līlayaivopapannair
devān sādhūn loka-setūn bibharṣi
haṁsy unmārgān hiṁsayā vartamānān
janmaitat te bhāra-hārāya bhūmeḥ

With various intentions, you perform pastimes to maintain the devatās, the saintly persons and the codes of religion for this world. By these pastimes you also kill those who stray from the right path and live by violence. Your present incarnation is meant to relieve the earth's burden.

COMMENTARY: "If I am without fault, why do I sometimes kill?" By pastimes with your devotees which arise at the proper time, consisting of various goals such as protecting those who follow your devotees and killing those opposed to your devotees, you protect Indra and other devatās, and the sages who are the shelter for the general populace. You kill those who oppose the proper path since you are the avatāra who has appeared to relieve the earth of her burden since she is your great devotee. Because you are so merciful to your topmost devotees such as the earth, your violence against the wicked is your great quality, beyond māyā.

Text 63.28

tapto ’ham te tejasā duḥsahena
śāntogreṇāty-ulbaṇena jvareṇa
tāvat tāpo dehināṁ te ’nghri-mūlaṁ
no severan yāvad āśānubaddhāḥ

I am tortured by the fierce power of your terrible fever weapon, which is cold yet burning. All embodied souls must suffer as long as they remain bound to material ambitions and thus averse to serving your feet.

COMMENTARY: Having surrendered, he states his purpose. I am suffering because of your intolerable power in the form of the jvara. It is cool for the devotees, just as the women saw you as Cupid, but burning fiercely for me, just as the wrestlers saw you as a thunderbolt. That weapon is extreme (ulbaṇena). All suffering, what to speak of only the suffering from the jvara, will continue as long as people do not surrender to your feet. They do not surrender because they are completely bound by aspirations for sons, wealth and other persons. Or, those bound by the thirst for your mercy serve you.

Text 63.29

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
tri-śiras te prasanno ’smi vyetu te maj-jvarād bhayam
yo nau smarati saṁvādaṁ tasya tvan na bhaved bhayam

The Supreme Lord said: O three-headed one, I am pleased with you. May your fear of my fever weapon be dispelled, and may whoever remembers our conversation here have no reason to fear you.

COMMENTARY: Because of his desire, the Lord immediately relieved him of suffering, but not completely. That is expressed in the Lord’s words. Whoever remembers our conversation will be free of the fear of you, what to speak of remembering the battle. And what to speak of that person who hears about the battle or glorifies it! Out of mercy for the people, the Lord gives this blessing. Everyone will be free of similar sufferings by remembering the conversation. Or, he who remembers the conversation will be free of fear, but more than that, you, who have surrendered to me, will be free from fear of my jvara.

Text 63.30

ity ukto 'cyutam ānamya gato māheśvaro jvaraḥ
bāṇas tu ratham ārūḍhaḥ prāgād yotsyan janārdanam

Thus addressed, the Māheśvara-jvara bowed down to the infallible Lord and went away. But Bāṇāsura then appeared, riding forth on his chariot to fight Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: The Lord did not waver from his good qualities such as forgiving everyone's faults (acyutam). The word tu indicates that though powerful jvara went away, Bāṇa came, out of great foolishness. His driver was Nandīśvara. Jvara describes this in Viṣṇu Purāṇa:

nandīśa-saṁgṛhītāśvam adhirūḍho mahāratham
bāṇas tatrāyayau yoddhuṁ kṛṣṇa-kārṣṇibalaiḥ saha

Bāṇa, mounted on a huge chariot with horses guided by Nandīśa, then came to fight with Kṛṣṇa and his armies.

Bāṇa came, fighting with the Lord who afflicts the evil people (janārdanam). Thus Bāṇa came in order to cause himself suffering.

Text 63.31

tato bāhu-sahasreṇa nānāyudha-dharo 'suraḥ
mumoca parama-kruddho bāṇāṁś cakrāyudhe nṛpa

Carrying numerous weapons in his thousand hands, O King, the terribly infuriated demon shot many arrows at Kṛṣṇa, the carrier of the disc weapon.

COMMENTARY: Though Bāṇa carried many weapons, though he was king (if the word is nṛpaḥ instead of nṛpa) of the demonic troops, being most furious, first he personally released arrows from far off. But Kṛṣṇa was the wielder of the cakra. Thus all his arrows were useless against Kṛṣṇa. Or because he was furious, out of a loss of intelligence, he shot arrows at the holder of the cakra. If the version with nṛpa is accepted, then Śukadeva laughs, saying, "O King Parīkṣit, he was so foolish to do this."

Text 63.32

tasyāsyato ’strāṇy asakṛc cakreṇa kṣura-neminā
ciccheda bhagavān bāhūn śākhā iva vanaspateḥ

As Bāṇa continued hurling weapons at him, the Supreme Lord began using his sharp-edged cakra to cut off Bāṇāsura’s arms as if they were tree branches.

COMMENTARY: Later, when Bāṇa began hurling various weapons at Kṛṣṇa, as soon as the weapons were released, Kṛṣṇa cut off his arms since he was endowed with all powers (bhagavān), using his sharp-edged cakra. He did this quickly and easily. Hari-vaṁśa describes this:

alāta-cakravat tūrṇaṁ bhramyac cakraṁ sadābhavat
kṣiptaṁ tu vāsudevena bāṇasya raṇa-mūrdhani
viṣṇu-cakraṁ bhramaty āśu śaighryād rūpam na dṛśyate
tasya bāhu-sahasrasya paryāyeṇa punaḥ punaḥ
bāṇasya chedanaṁ cakre tac cakraṁ raṇa-mūrdhani

In front of the battle with Bāṇa, the cakra thrown by the Lord revolved quickly and constantly, like a fire brand moving in a circle. It moved so fast that its form could not be seen. The cakra cut off Bāṇa’s thousand arms one at a time on the battlefield.

Text 63.33

bāhuṣu chidyamāneṣu bāṇasya bhagavān bhavaḥ
bhaktānukampy upavrajya cakrāyudham abhāṣata

Śiva felt compassion for his devotee Bāṇāsura, whose arms were being cut off, and thus he approached Kṛṣṇa and spoke to him as follows.

COMMENTARY: Though Śiva had great power and knowledge (bhagavān) he approached Kṛṣṇa, taking shelter of him in surrender. “But Kṛṣṇa should ignore such a great offender.” But Kṛṣṇa has great compassion for his followers (bhaktānukampi). He actually fought with Kṛṣṇa to show the Lord’s glories. Śiva made efforts to get relief for his offense to the Lord, who knew everything however. But now it was proper that he made an effort to remove the offense of his devotee caused by previous tendencies.

Kṛṣṇa was the wielder of the cakra. After cutting off Bāṇa’s arms Śiva had a fear that the cakra would also kill Bāṇa. Though Śiva should have praised

Kṛṣṇa, he merely spoke to him (abhāṣata). He could not utter praises, since he could not describe the Lord's actual form. He had been afflicted by yawning previously but now he had recovered.

Text 63.34

śrī-rudra uvāca
tvaṁ hi brahma paraṁ jyotir gūḍhaṁ brahmaṇi vāṅ-maye
yaṁ paśyanty amalātmāna ākāśam iva kevalam

Śrī Rudra said: You alone are the Absolute Truth, self-revealing, the mystery hidden within the Vedas. Those whose hearts are spotless can see you, for you are uncontaminated, like the sky.

COMMENTARY: You alone (hi) are the supreme tattva (param). "How is that supreme tattva divided up and visible as my form?" There is nothing greater than you (brahma) and you reveal everything and are self-revealing (jyotiḥ). "What is the proof of this?" You are sometimes revealed (gūḍham) in the Vedas (brahmaṇi). Gopāla-tāpanī says:

te hocur etasya govindasyākhilādhāriṇo brūhī

Tell us about Govinda, the support of everything.

cetanaś cetanānām

Govinda is the consciousness supporting all conscious entities.

tam ha devam ātma-vṛtti-prakāśam

Govinda reveals the functions of the ātmā.

It is also said gūḍhaṁ paraṁ brahma manuṣya-liṅgam: Kṛṣṇa is the secret Brahman in human form. SB 7.10.48

"Why do I appear to be impure?" Those who are pure realize you as pure (kevalam), engaging only with your svarūpa-śakti, just as ether is not contaminated by other qualities.

Text 63.35–36

nābhir nabho 'gnir mukham ambu reto
dyauḥ śīrṣam āśāḥ śrutir aṅghrir urvī
candro mano yasya dṛg arka ātmā
ahaṁ samudro jaṭharaṁ bhujendraḥ

romāṇi yasyauṣadhayo ’mbu-vāhāḥ
keśā viriñco dhiṣaṇā visargaḥ
prajā-patir hṛdayaṁ yasya dharmaḥ
sa vai bhavān puruṣo loka-kalpaḥ

The sky is your navel, fire your mouth, water your semen, and heaven your head. The cardinal directions are your ears, herbal plants the hairs on your body, and water-bearing clouds the hair on your head. The earth is your foot, the moon your mind, and the sun your vision, while I am your ego. The ocean is your abdomen, Indra your arm, Brahmā in your intelligence, the progenitor of mankind is your genitals, and dharma is your heart. You are the original puruṣa, the creator of the worlds.

COMMENTARY: You are made the object of worship by all the fourteen worlds (loka-kalpah). Or the puruṣa, the universal form, composed of the fourteen worlds, is you. You are the foundation of the universal form.

Text 63.37

tavāvatāro ’yam akuṇṭha-dhāman dharmasya guptyai jagato hitāya
vayaṁ ca sarve bhavatānubhāvitā vibhāvayāmo bhuvanāni sapta

Your current descent into the material realm, O Lord of unrestricted power, is meant for upholding dharma and benefiting the entire universe. We devatās, each depending on your grace and authority, protect the seven planetary systems.

COMMENTARY: “How can I, limited with this body, have the sky as my navel?” Actually the meaning of the previous verse is that because the Lord is the controller of each limb, he is associated with the elements and objects associated with those limbs. Your form is infallible over all time and space, but by your inconceivable śakti you can appear to be limited in one place. Your form is infallible. Or this verse can be an answer to “If I have such a form just mentioned, why do I appear in this world in my svarūpa?” O Lord dwelling in Goloka! Your astonishing form as avatāra is for protecting particularly the bhakti of your devotees for the benefit of all jīvas in this and next life. And we especially protect the worlds by spreading your bhakti.

Text 63.38

tvam eka ādyaḥ puruṣo 'dvitīyas
turyaḥ sva-dṛg dhetur ahetur īśaḥ
pratīyase 'thāpi yathā-vikāraṁ
sva-māyayā sarva-guṇa-prasiddhyai

You are the original person, one without a second, transcendental and self-manifesting. Uncaused, you are the cause of all, and you are the ultimate controller. You are nonetheless perceived in terms of the transformations of matter effected by inconceivable energy—transformations you sanction so that the various material objects can fully manifest.

COMMENTARY: "If you devatās are maintainers of the worlds, why do you say that I am Brahman? It is not possible for me to be Brahman while being different from it and possessing qualities—by which I can have you as maintainers of the planets." You are one without a second, because you are the original puruṣa. Of the three forms, you are the puruṣa who manifests prakṛti. Your expansions depend on you. You act in this way for manifesting all objects (sarva-guṇa-prasiddhyai). The intention is to show the difference between the Lord and the jīvas. We are your vibhūtis. Since you do not have anyone who is equal to you, you are Brahman. Moreover, you appear as various forms with bodies according to the degree of consciousness (yathā vikāram). This is done by your inconceivable śakti (māyayā) since you are not touched by the qualities of matter.

Or, you are one, without another who is similar. You are without different species (advitīyah) since you are first. You are the root form of the three puruṣas as stated in viṣṇus tu trīṇi rūpāṇi. (Nārada-tantra) Therefore you are the real puruṣa. Śruti says pūrvam evāham ihāsam iti tat-puruṣasya puruṣatvam: in the beginning I alone existed in this world as the best of the puruṣas. (Taittirīya Āraṇyaka 1.23.1)

Why are you first? You are turyaḥ.

virāḍ hiraṇyagarbhaś ca kāraṇaṁ cety upādhayaḥ
īśasya yantribhir hīnaṁ tat turīyaṁ pracakṣate

The Lord's universal form, his Hiraṇyagarbha form and māyā are all coverings, but because the Lord is not covered by these three, intelligent

authorities call him turīya, the fourth. Bhāvārtha-dīpika 11.15.16

How is that? You are self-manifesting. Thus you are the cause and without a cause. Though you are indivisible, according to various transformations for manifesting the three guṇas for all beings, you become the form of Mahāviṣṇu and appear to possess guṇas by degrees of your powerful avaraṇa-śakti (sva-māyayā). Thus you alone are the Lord (īśaḥ).

Or "Some of you are my guṇāvatāras and some of you are my vibhūtis. Thus you are not different from me." You alone are the Lord and we are only servants. "Why?" You are the first puruṣa because you are the fourth (turyaḥ). Because Nārāyaṇa and Vāsudeva are included within you, you are without a second. Thus you are the cause (hetuḥ) of all others but you are without cause (ahetuḥ), since you are self-manifesting. But you appear as many eternal, real forms for your devotees. By your mercy (sva-māyayā) to your devotees, you appear so as to spread (prasiddhyai) to the people all your qualities like beauty, or to produce the highest perfection of your qualities, according to your bhāva (yathā vikāram).

Text 63.39

yathaiva sūryaḥ pihitaś chāyayā svayā
chāyāṁ ca rūpāṇi ca sañcakāsti
evaṁ guṇenāpihito guṇāṁs tvam
ātma-pradīpo guṇinaś ca bhūman

O almighty one, just as the sun, though hidden by a cloud, illuminates the cloud and all other visible forms as well, so you, although hidden by the material qualities, remain self-luminous and thus reveal all those qualities, along with the living entities who possess them.

COMMENTARY: O Lord, you are the cause of everything (bhūman). Since you are all-pervading you are indivisible. This verse elaborates on this. Or, "If I am the puruṣas who create, as the instigator of māyā in those forms, I will be touched with fault." An example is given to remove this doubt.

Or, though you are most merciful as the crest jewel for the devotees, you do not spread directly because of your natural qualities like shyness and courtesy. By gurus, not being visible yourself, you spread your glories. You are the treasure house of all great qualities. This verse is then spoken.

Hidden, you reveal yourself completely (sañcakāsti). You cannot be uncovered (apihitaḥ) by the form of a guru, by the jīva who is like the ray of the sun, a taṭastha particle (guṇena). You reveal completely your qualities like mercy and you reveal gurus and others who distribute your qualities like mercy (guṇinaḥ) in order to reveal yourself. There is no other cause for this revelation: you reveal everything by your mercy (ātma-pradīpaḥ). That is the cause. O Lord with continuous glories!

Text 63.40

yan-māyā-mohita-dhiyaḥ putra-dāra-gṛhādiṣu
unmajjanti nimajjanti prasaktā vṛjinārṇave

Their intelligence bewildered by your māyā, fully attached to children, wife, home and so on, persons immersed in the ocean of material misery sometimes rise to the surface and sometimes sink down.

COMMENTARY: After indicating the Lord's profound glories, Śiva, in five verses (40-44), gives information to teach Bāṇa who is full of pride, by making him ashamed, in order to give him mercy. The glories of the Lord are not astonishing. But generally, everyone is bewildered. This verse describes the bewilderment.

Their intelligence is bewildered by your māyā.

Text 63.41

deva-dattam imaṁ labdhvā nṛ-lokam ajitendriyaḥ
yo nādriyeta tvat-pādau sa śocyo hy ātma-vañcakaḥ

One who has attained this human form of life as a gift from God, yet who fails to control his senses and honor your feet, is surely to be pitied, for he is only cheating himself.

COMMENTARY: Though you make a person qualified for bhakti to you, such as by having me teach Bāṇa out of mercy, the person remains disinterested in you and is to be lamented by persons like me. Having attained a human body suitable for serving you by your mercy, or having attained the human world where you appear as avatāra, now by the mercy which spreads everywhere through a relationship with some great devotees, if he does not respect your feet, he is lamentable. The Lord should be most respected

for giving such help but because a person cannot control his senses, he does not respect you, since (hi) he cheats himself.

Text 63.42

yas tvāṁ visṛjate martya ātmānaṁ priyam īśvaram
viparyayendriyārthārthaṁ viṣam atty amṛtaṁ tyajan

That mortal who rejects you—his true self, dearest friend, and Lord—for the sake of sense objects, whose nature is just the opposite, refuses nectar and instead consumes poison.

COMMENTARY: Though I have taught him as a guru, even now he rejects you. He is most lamentable. He is subject to death, and should thus not reject the nectar. He is also punished by you for not worshipping you, since you are the Lord. You are the self, are dear, and are the Lord (īśvaram). Stronger and stronger reasons are given for worshipping him. But he rejects you. He does not worship you. He takes poison, rejecting nectar. This shows his lack of discrimination. Instead of tyajan sometimes tyajet is seen.

Text 63.43

ahaṁ brahmātha vibudhā munayaś cāmalāśayāḥ
sarvātmanā prapannās tvām ātmānaṁ preṣṭham īśvaram

I, Lord Brahmā, the other devatās and the pure-minded sages have all surrendered wholeheartedly unto you, our dearest self and Lord.

COMMENTARY: This insignificant person does not worship you. We who are perfect worship you. By not worshipping you, the person destroys himself. I and Brahmā who have attained the highest positions by accepting to be guṇāvatāras, devarṣis (vibudhā), brahmarṣis (munayaḥ) and ātmārāmas whose hearts are clean or are fixed in Brahman, take shelter of you with complete conviction and worship you, since you are the root svarūpa (ātmānam), dearest of all, and the Lord.

Text 63.44

taṁ tvā jagat-sthity-udayānta-hetuṁ
samaṁ prasāntaṁ suhṛd-ātma-daivam

ananyam ekaṁ jagad-ātma-ketaṁ
bhavāpavargāya bhajāma devam

Let us worship you, the Supreme Lord, to be freed from material life. You are the maintainer of the universe and the cause of its creation and demise. Equipoised and perfectly at peace, you are the true friend, self and worshipable Lord. You are one without a second, the shelter of all the worlds and all souls.

COMMENTARY: In this way, we pray. Śiva lists the qualities by which the Lord should be merciful to Bāṇa. We worship you who are worthy of worship. "Do you worship me for material goals?" No, we worship you for bhakti, birth after birth (bhavāpavargāya). Apavarga can mean bhakti according to statements in the Fifth Canto. The reason is that you are attractive with qualities like mercy: you reveal yourself to the devotees or engage in pastimes with them (devam).

Text 63.45

ayaṁ mameṣṭo dayito 'nuvartī
mayābhayaṁ dattam amuṣya deva
sampādyatāṁ tad bhavataḥ prasādo
yathā hi te daitya-patau prasādaḥ

This Bāṇāsura is my dear and faithful follower, and I have awarded him freedom from fear. Therefore, my Lord, please grant him your mercy, just as you showed mercy to Prahlāda, the lord of the demons.

COMMENTARY: Since I have acted favorably to Bāṇa and have had affection for him for a long time, you should also act similarly. When I danced with great devotion for you, he assisted me by playing instruments. Thus I developed affection for him (iṣṭaḥ). He is an object of mercy (dayitaḥ) naturally, since he is related to Prahlāda and Bali. He has become my follower. Thinking of your mercy, I have awarded him fearlessness. You should give him mercy. Thinking of his offense of fighting with the Lord, Śiva becomes ashamed and he gives the example of Prahlāda. Just as you were merciful to Prahlāda you should be merciful to him.

Text 63.46

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
yad āttha bhagavaṁs tvaṁ naḥ karavāma priyaṁ tava
bhavato yad vyavasitaṁ tan me sādhv anumoditam

The Supreme Lord said: O omniscient one! For your pleasure I must certainly do what you have requested of me. I fully agree with your conclusion.

COMMENTARY: Śiva, you are omniscient (bhagavan)! You know that I should respect Bāṇa because of his relationship with Prahlāda. You know it is glorious for me to give mercy to him. You know I took pleasure in fighting with him. You know that I would be fully satisfied with just cutting off his arms. You have ascertained all of this (vyavasitam). I must do what you have requested me, since you have affection for him. I cannot ignore your request. I will fulfill what you have concluded by your intelligence. I have agreed (anumoditam) that it is good, since you have concluded in this way. He uses the past tense to make the statement stronger. The Lord uses the plural (naḥ) to indicate that Prahlāda and others as well agree. Among us, what you requested to this particular individual (the Lord) will be done by him. Later he uses the singular (me). It is accepted by me personally as well as all others.

Text 63.47

avadhyo 'yaṁ mamāpy eṣa vairocani-suto 'suraḥ
prahrādāya varo datto na vadhyo me tavānvayaḥ

I will not kill this demonic son of Vairocani, for I gave Prahlāda Mahārāja the benediction that I would not kill any of his descendants.

COMMENTARY: I will certainly not kill him. Though he is a demon he will not be killed because he is the son of Vairocani (he was the son of Bali, who was the son of Virocana who was a son of Prahlāda). Another version has Vairocana. He is a descendent, related to Prahlāda. Because of this, he cannot be born as an insect, snake or frog, in his next life. I cannot kill him like Pūtanā or Baka. Because I worry about inauspiciousness for the people, snakes and others were killed by my friends. Others related to Prahlāda, though evil, should be taught by punishment.

Text 63.48

darpopaśamanāyāsya pravṛkṇā bāhavo mayā
sūditaṁ ca balaṁ bhūri yac ca bhārāyitaṁ bhuvaḥ

It was to subdue Bāṇāsura's false pride that I severed his arms. And I slew his mighty army because it had become a burden upon the earth.

COMMENTARY: He was proud that you gave him a thousand arms. To take away that pride, quickly I cut off those arms. I slaughtered his army (balam).

Text 63.49

catvāro 'sya bhujāḥ śiṣṭā bhaviṣyaty ajarāmaraḥ
pārṣada-mukhyo bhavato na kutaścid-bhayo 'suraḥ

This demon, who still has four arms, will be immune to old age and death, and he will serve as one of your principal attendants. Thus he will have nothing to fear on any account.

COMMENTARY: The Lord gives mercy. Though he is a demon, according to your request, he will be your chief associate. By the Lord's giving freedom from old age and death, the demon became peaceful even though he was in pain by having his arms cut off. He would have no fear, even of saṁsāra. He would thus be a jīvan-mukta in the future. SB 11.12.5 mentions that by attaining the Lord's associates, he went to the Lord's abode. Using na kutaścid-bhayaḥ instead of akutaścid-bhayaḥ is poetic license.

Text 63.50

iti labdhvābhayaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ praṇamya śirasāsuraḥ
prādyumniṁ ratham āropya sa-vadhvo samupānayat

Thus attaining freedom from fear, Bāṇāsura offered obeisances to Kṛṣṇa by touching his head to the ground. Bāṇa then seated Aniruddha and his bride on their chariot and brought them before the Lord.

COMMENTARY: Though Bāṇa had seen the Lord before, now by his mercy he offered respects to the Lord who was glorious for attracting everyone's mind (kṛṣṇam). He brought the couple close to Kṛṣṇa with many ornaments (sam-upa-anayat).

Text 63.51

akṣauhiṇyā parivṛtaṁ su-vāsaḥ-samalaṅkṛtam
sa-patnīkaṁ puras-kṛtya yayau rudrānumoditaḥ

At the front of the party Kṛṣṇa then placed Aniruddha and his bride, both beautifully adorned with fine clothes and ornaments, and surrounded them with a full military division. Thus Kṛṣṇa took his leave of Śiva and departed.

COMMENTARY: The word sam (with decorations, etc.) of the previous verse is here described. Kṛṣṇa put Aniruddha in front with Ūṣā. Śiva was now satisfied since his goal of having Bāṇa's arms cut off had been fulfilled. Or, having Śiva's sorrow concerning Bāṇa dissipated, Kṛṣṇa was pleased because Śiva was loyal to him.

Text 63.52

sva-rājadhānīṁ samalaṅkṛtāṁ dhvajaiḥ
sa-toraṇair ukṣita-mārga-catvarām
viveśa śaṅkhānaka-dundubhi-svanair
abhyudyataḥ paura-suhṛd-dvijātibhiḥ

The Lord then entered his capital. The city was lavishly decorated with flags and victory arches, and its avenues and crossways were all sprinkled with water. As conchs, ānaka and dundubhi drums resounded, the Lord's relatives, the brāhmaṇas and the general populace all came forward to greet him respectfully.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa entered Dvārakā, which was specially decorated, with streets sprinkled with water.

Text 63.53

ya evaṁ kṛṣṇa-vijayaṁ śaṅkareṇa ca saṁyugam
saṁsmaret prātar utthāya na tasya syāt parājayaḥ

Whoever rises early in the morning and remembers Kṛṣṇa's victory in his battle with Śiva will never experience defeat.

COMMENTARY: Whoever remembers Kṛṣṇa's victory over Bāṇa and his battle with Śiva will not experience defeat. Kṛṣṇa defeat of Bāṇa and defeating

Śiva by making him yawning should not be surprising. Just by remembering those incidents a person cannot be defeated by anyone. Whoever remembers with faith (sam-smaret) Kṛṣṇa's defeat of Bāṇa and Śiva fighting with Kṛṣṇa in order to give benefit to Bāṇa will not be defeated. What to speak of hearing and glorifying the events. Simply getting up in the morning, without bathing, one can remember this incident. The person will not be defeated by internal or external obstacles to bhakti.

Chapter Sixty-four
The Deliverance of King Nṛga

Text 64.1

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca
ekadopavanaṁ rājan jagmur yadu-kumārakāḥ
vihartuṁ sāmba-pradyumna cāru-bhānu-gadādayaḥ

Śukadeva said: O King, one day Sāmba, Pradyumna, Cāru, Bhānu, Gada and other young boys of the Yadu dynasty went to a small forest to play.

COMMENTARY: Having shown the power of Kṛṣṇa in defeating Śiva, Śukadeva now relates a story somewhat related. This event happened at some time (ekadā), not in the order it is narrated. This event happened before the birth of Aniruddha since Pradyumna would have to be in his yauvana age to have Aniruddha as his son. They are all described in this verse as kumāra and because they were attached to playing they must have been in the middle of their kaumāra period. Since Sāmba and others are also mentioned, he was in Dvārakā, not Rukmī's city, where Aniruddha was born. This incident must have happened just after he returned from Śambara's city. Śukadeva addresses Parīkṣit in amazement that a small sin of King Nṛga could have such effects or he calls to Parīkṣit to forget the details of the previous pastime and concentrate on the present pastime.

Text 64.2

krīḍitvā su-ciraṁ tatra vicinvantaḥ pipāsitāḥ
jalaṁ nirudake kūpe dadṛśuḥ sattvam adbhutam

After playing for a long time, they became thirsty. As they searched for water, they looked inside a dry well and saw a peculiar creature.

COMMENTARY: After playing in that forest (tatra) for a long time, looking for water because of thirst, they saw a creature, astonishing because of its huge body and its living in the well. With such a big body, it would have been well known for living in the well for a long time. That they only saw the lizard at this time was the will of the Lord. But it could only be seen

with difficulty because the water of the ancient well was deep, because the well was covered with creepers, and because one had to search in the water for it.

Text 64.3

kṛkalāsaṁ giri-nibhaṁ vīkṣya vismita-mānasāḥ
tasya coddharaṇe yatnaṁ cakrus te kṛpayānvitāḥ

The boys were astonished to behold this creature, a lizard who looked like a hill. They felt sorry for it and tried to lift it out of the well.

COMMENTARY: Because it had been living in that manner for a very long time, it was as huge as a mountain. This means the well was also very large. Seeing it directly, they were astonished. They became compassionate. Instead of vismita-mānasāḥ sometimes vismsita-cetasaḥ is seen.

Text 64.4

carma-jais tāntavaiḥ pāśair baddhvā patitam arbhakāḥ
nāśaknuran samuddhartuṁ kṛṣṇāyācakhyur utsukāḥ

They caught on to the fallen lizard with leather thongs and then with woven ropes, but still they could not lift it out. So they went to Kṛṣṇa and excitedly told him about the creature.

COMMENTARY: This verse describes their actions. The lizard was fallen (patitam) because it attained a lizard body by sin. They could not take it out since they were boys. Since they were children they did not yet have bold natures. Sometimes tam uddartum (could not lift him) is seen instead of samuddartum.

Text 64.5

tatrāgatyāravindākṣo bhagavān viśva-bhāvanaḥ
vīkṣyojjahāra vāmena taṁ kareṇa sa līlayā

The lotus-eyed Supreme Lord, the maintainer of the universe, went to the well and saw the lizard. Then with his left hand he easily lifted it out.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa's eyes opened wide with astonishment, like a blossoming lotus (aravindākṣaḥ). He came there and saw the lizard. With

his left hand, very easily he lifted it out, in a manner which attracted all (ujjahāra), since he was the protector of all beings (viśva-bhāvanaḥ) and he was all powerful (bhagavān).

Text 64.6

sa uttamaḥ-śloka-karābhimṛṣṭo
vihāya sadyaḥ kṛkalāsa-rūpam
santapta-cāmīkara-cāru-varṇaḥ
svargy adbhutālaṅkaraṇāmbara-srak

Touched by the hand of the glorious Supreme Lord, the being at once gave up its lizard form and assumed that of a resident of heaven. His complexion was beautifully colored like molten gold, and he was adorned with wonderful ornaments, clothes and garlands.

COMMENTARY: Immediately he was freed of all sin and achieved an auspicious place. Kṛṣṇa is he who delivers one from saṁsāra (uttama) just by hearing his glories (śloka). Or Kṛṣṇa is he who is praised (śloka) wonderfully (uttama) because he delivers the universe even by nāmābhāsa and other means.

The lizard was touched by his hand and immediately gave up the lizard body. Other reasons are rejected. He did not need to experience his prārabdha-karmas. This is indicated by describing heavenly qualities in him. Or, he is described in order to indicate his qualities as an inhabitant of Svarga in two lines by describing his golden complexion, his beauty and his ornaments.

Text 64.7

papraccha vidvān api tan-nidānaṁ
janeṣu vikhyāpayituṁ mukundaḥ
kas tvaṁ mahā-bhāga vareṇya-rūpo
devottamaṁ tvāṁ gaṇayāmi nūnam

Kṛṣṇa understood the situation, but to inform people in general he inquired as follows: "Who are you, O greatly fortunate one? Seeing your excellent form, I think you must surely be an exalted devatā.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa had freed him from the lizard body (mukundaḥ). O greatly fortunate one! His good fortune is described: you have a fine form with great beauty. I think you must be the best of devatās. Nūnam indicates conjecture.

Text 64.8

daśām imāṁ vā katamena karmaṇā
samprāpito 'sy atad-arhaḥ su-bhadra
ātmānam ākhyāhi vivitsatāṁ no
yan manyase naḥ kṣamam atra vaktum

"By what past activity were you brought to this condition? It seems you did not deserve such a fate, O good soul. We are eager to know about you, so please inform us about yourself—if, that is, you think this the proper time and place to tell us."

COMMENTARY: The word vā indicates lamentation. What action brought you to this condition? Such a condition is not proper for you. Instead of asi sometimes hi (certainly) is seen. The reason is given. O most auspicious one (subhadra)! We wish to know about you. The plural possessive is used (naḥ vivitsatām) to indicate all the Yādavas who had quickly come there in great wonder. Please tell us if you wish to reveal it. The Lord spoke politely since he was the ocean of good qualities. The plural naḥ is also used a second time out of politeness.

Text 64.9

śrī-śuka uvāca
iti sma rājā sampṛṣṭaḥ kṛṣṇenānanta-mūrtinā
mādhavaṁ praṇipatyāha kirīṭenārka-varcasā

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus questioned by Kṛṣṇa, whose forms are unlimited, the king, his helmet as dazzling as the sun, bowed down to Mādhava and replied as follows.

COMMENTARY: The word sma means well known. The word "king" is used in deference to his previous position since his lizard condition was no longer visible. Kṛṣṇa had a form of complete happiness (ānanda-mūrtinā). Just by seeing the Lord and then by being questioned by him, the king experienced

bliss. Instead of ānanda sometimes ananta (a form with eternal powers) is seen. By such an appearance of the Lord the king became astonished. First, attaining his heavenly form, he became stunned. He did not understand it was the Lord. Then, by mercy, the Lord spoke to him. Then he realized bliss from the Lord's form. Then, realizing the Lord's bliss and powers, he offered respects. According to what the Lord requested, he spoke. He realized the Lord as the husband of Lakṣmī (mādhavam). Bowing down with his crown especially shining (as well as other ornaments), he spoke.

Text 64.10

nṛga uvāca
nṛgo nāma narendro 'ham ikṣvāku-tanayaḥ prabho
dāniṣv ākhyāyamāneṣu yadi te karṇam aspṛśam

King Nṛga said: I am a king known as Nṛga, the son of Ikṣvāku. Perhaps, Lord, you have heard of me when lists of charitable men were recited.

COMMENTARY: Nṛga is described as the brother of Ikṣvāku and the son of Śrāddhadeva (Vaivasvata Manu) in the Ninth Canto. Nṛga mentioned here is a different person, the son of Ikṣvāku. By saying he was a king, he denies that he was the best of the devatās. By saying his name, he answers the question "Who are you?" O lord of all kings (prabho)! You may have heard my name when groups of bards sing ancient histories. The word yadi expresses some doubt. Or the doubt is a manifestation of his politeness arising from his inner humility. Because he did not consider himself worthy of renown, he said, "Perhaps it has touched your ears." This means "Perhaps you have slightly heard of me." Since you are the Lord of all lords, it is impossible that you would have heard about insignificant persons. In mentioning charitable persons, he hints at his giving of charity (which caused his problem). That such a small fault would cause such a serious reaction was for informing the general public. The intention of the Lord will be explained later.

Text 64.11

kiṁ nu te 'viditaṁ nātha sarva-bhūtātma-sākṣiṇaḥ
kālenāvyāhata-dṛśo vakṣye 'thāpi tavājñayā

What could possibly be unknown to you, O master? With vision undisturbed by time, you witness the minds of all living beings. Nevertheless, on your order I will speak.

COMMENTARY: "Yes, I have heard about you, but I do not know the cause of your condition." Nṛga answers with this verse. O Supreme Lord (nātha)! Since you are the witness of the minds of all beings, you know everything. If you know everything inside, you know everything outside as well. And you cannot say that with time you also forget. Your knowledge is not disturbed by time.

Text 64.12

yāvatyaḥ sikatā bhūmer yāvatyo divi tārakāḥ
yāvatyo varṣa-dhārāś ca tāvatīr adadaṁ sma gāḥ

I gave in charity as many cows as there are grains of sand on the earth, stars in the heavens, or drops in a rain shower.

COMMENTARY: I gave as many cows as the total of all grains of sand, stars and rain drops. The word ca indicates that actually the number of cows cannot be counted. Sma means that it is famous. The numbers cannot be imagined.

Text 64.13

payasvinīs taruṇīḥ śīla-rūpa-
guṇopapannāḥ kapilā hema-śṛṅgīḥ
nyāyārjitā rūpya-khurāḥ sa-vatsā
dukūla-mālābharaṇā dadāv aham

Young, brown, milk-laden cows, who were well behaved, beautiful and endowed with good qualities, who were all acquired honestly, and who had gilded horns, silver-plated hooves and decorations of fine ornamental cloths and garlands—such were the cows, along with their calves, that I gave in charity.

COMMENTARY: After describing the unlimited number of cows he describes their qualities. They all had good natures (śīla), being easily controlled by their master. They were beautiful with good nourishment (rūpa). They always gave plentiful milk (guṇa). There are ten types of kapila cows.

suvarṇa-kapilā pūrvā dvitīyā gaura-piṅgalā
tṛtīya caiva raktākṣī caturthī guḍa-piṅgalā
pañcamī bahu-varṇā syāt ṣaṣṭhī syāt śveta-piṅgalā
saptamī śveta-piṅgākṣi aṣṭamī kṛṣna-piṅgalā
navamī pātalā jñeyā daśamī pucccha-piṅgalā
etā daśa samākhyātāḥ kapilās te varānane
sarvāścaitā mahābhāgās tārayanti na sāṁśayaḥ

The first is golden brown, the second is pale brown, the third has red eyes, the fourth is deep brown, the fifth is multi-colored, the sixth is white and brown, the seventh has light brown eyes, the eighth is black and brown, the ninth is pink and the tenth has a brown tail. O beautiful woman! These ten are called kapila cows. They are all most auspicious. By donating these cows one crosses saṁsāra without a doubt.

The order of the list of qualities is with increasing excellence. This will be stated later also. Not only that, but they were well decorated with gold horns and silver hooves, and with cloth on their backs and ornaments. They had garlands made of jewels around their necks and were accompanied by calves. Thus they gave milk. They had been gathered by lawful means. He again states that he gave cows to reinforce his previous statement.

Text 64.14–15

sv-alaṅkṛtebhyo guṇa-śīlavadbhyaḥ
sīdat-kuṭumbebhya ṛta-vratebhyaḥ
tapaḥ-śruta-brahma-vadānya-sadbhyaḥ
prādāṁ yuvabhyo dvija-puṅgavebhyaḥ
go-bhū-hiraṇyāyatanāśva-hastinaḥ
kanyāḥ sa-dāsīs tila-rūpya-śayyāḥ
vāsāṁsi ratnāni paricchadān rathān
iṣṭaṁ ca yajñaiś caritaṁ ca pūrtam

I first honored the brāhmaṇas who were recipients of my charity by decorating them with fine ornaments. Those most exalted brāhmaṇas, whose families were in need, were young and possessed of excellent physical features and mental qualities. They were dedicated to vratas done sincerely, faithful to rituals, vastly learned in the Vedic scriptures,

generous and dedicated to proper conduct. I gave them bulls, land, gold and houses, along with horses, elephants and marriageable girls with maidservants, as well as sesame, silver, fine beds, clothing, jewels, utensils and chariots. In addition, I performed Vedic sacrifices and executed various pious welfare activities.

COMMENTARY: Now he describes the good qualities of the recipients of charity. I first decorated them with gold earrings and other ornaments. They had good physical features (guṇa) and good internal dispositions (śīla) with honesty and gentleness. They had performed vratas carefully for their upliftment.

dharmaś ca satyaṁ ca damas tapaś ca amātsaryaṁ hrīs titikṣānasūyā
yajñaś ca dānaṁ ca dhṛtiḥ śrutaṁ ca mahāvratā dvādaśa brāhmaṇasya

The twelve vratas of the brāhmaṇa are dharma, truthfulness, control of the senses, austerity, lack of envy, shyness, tolerance, lack of indignation, sacrifice, charity, fortitude and learning. Mahābhārata

These brāhmaṇas performed vratas without duplicity (ṛta-vratebhyaḥ). Tapa means dedicated to daily rituals of sva-dharma like sandhyā-vandana, etc. Satyam means inclined to follow proper behavior (sadbhyaḥ). They were youthful, in order to perform dharma properly. They were the best among all the brāhmaṇas. I gave them the cows with devotion (pra-adām), washing their feet etc.

Not only did I give cows, but many other objects. Go means bulls. Āyatana means houses. Paricchada means umbrellas, cāmaras and other utensils. I gave all of this. (Verb is understood.)

The word ca mentioned twice in the last line, indicates the predominance of the charity over the sacrifices, and that these acts were done in the proper way.

Text 64.16

kasyacid dvija-mukhyasya bhraṣṭā gaur mama go-dhane
sampṛktāviduṣā sā ca mayā dattā dvijātaye

Once a cow belonging to a certain first-class brāhmaṇa wandered away and entered my herd. Unaware of this, I gave that cow in charity to a

different brāhmaṇa.

COMMENTARY: One cow of the brāhmaṇa wandered into my herd.

Text 64.17

tāṁ nīyamānāṁ tat-svāmī dṛṣṭrovāca mameti tam
mameti parigrāhy āha nṛgo me dattavān iti

When the cow's first owner saw her being led away, he said, "She is mine!" The second brāhmaṇa, who had accepted her as a gift, replied, "No, she's mine! Nṛga gave her to me."

COMMENTARY: The last iti means "because."

Text 64.18

viprau vivadamānau mām ūcatuḥ svārtha-sādhakau
bhavān dātāpaharteti tac chrutvā me 'bhavad bhramaḥ

As the two brāhmaṇas argued, each trying to fulfill his own purpose, they came to me. One of them said, "You gave me this cow," and the other said, "But you stole her from me." Hearing this, I was bewildered.

COMMENTARY: The two spoke to preserve their senses of pride (svārtha-sādhakau).

Text 64.19–20

anunītāv ubhau viprau dharma-kṛcchra-gatena vai
gavāṁ lakṣaṁ prakṛṣṭānāṁ dāsyāmy eṣā pradīyatām
bhavantāv anugṛhṇītāṁ kiṅkarasyāvijānataḥ
samuddharataṁ māṁ kṛcchrāt patantaṁ niraye 'śucau

Finding myself in a terrible dilemma concerning dharma in the situation, I humbly entreated both the brāhmaṇas: "I will give one hundred thousand of the best cows in exchange for this one. Please give her back to me. Your good selves should be merciful to me, your servant. I did not know what I was doing. Please save me from this difficult situation, or I'll surely fall into a filthy hell."

COMMENTARY: I have fallen into a painful situation concerning dharma (dharma-kṛcchreṇa). Instead of gatena vai sometimes upāgate (went) is

seen. With inner purity, giving up all selfishness, this cow should be given to me (pra-dīyatām). You should be merciful to me, who should be delivered from difficulty (kṛcchrāt). The difficulty is described: falling into hell. Or, you should be merciful to me who have fallen into hell because of my sin (kṛcchrāt).

Text 64.21

nāhaṁ pratīcche vai rājann ity uktvā svāmy apākramat
nānyad gavām apy ayutam icchāmīty aparo yayau

The present owner of the cow said, "I don't want anything in exchange for this cow, O King," and went away. The other brāhmaṇa declared, "I don't want even ten thousand more cows [than you are offering]," and he too went away.

COMMENTARY: I will not accept anything else in exchange. He went away in fear of being forced to exchange the cow.

Text 64.22

etasminn antare yāmair dūtair nīto yama-kṣayam
yamena pṛṣṭas tatrāhaṁ deva-deva jagat-pate

O Lord of lords, O master of the universe, the agents of Yamarāja, taking advantage of the opportunity thus created, later carried me to his abode. There Yamarāja himself questioned me.

COMMENTARY: At the opportunity provided by his death at the end of his allotted lifespan, he fell to Yama's abode. As will be stated later, he was a pious person and therefore went to Yama's abode above Mānasa in the south (not hell). This place was not located on earth. In that place, Yama personally questioned him out of respect. O Kṛṣṇa, you are worshipped by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, since you are the protector of the universe (jagat-pate)! In order to protect the universe you have appointed Yama to be in charge of dharma and no one can trespass your rules. For this reason Yama questioned the king.

Text 64.23

pūrvaṁ tvam aśubhaṁ bhuṅkṣa utāho nṛpate śubham
nāntaṁ dānasya dharmasya paśye lokasya bhāsvataḥ

[Yamarāja said:] My dear King, do you wish to experience the results of your sins first, or those of your piety? Indeed, I see no end to your enjoyment in Svarga, shining with happiness and powers, because of your charity and sacrifices.

COMMENTARY: Will you experience the sin arising from taking the cow (aśubham) first? I see no end of your staying in Svarga, shining with wondrous happiness and powers, because of your unlimited performance of sacrifices (dharmasya) and charity.

Text 64.24

pūrvaṁ devāśubhaṁ bhuñja iti prāha pateti saḥ
tāvad adrākṣam ātmānaṁ kṛkalāsaṁ patan prabho

I replied, "First, my lord, let me suffer my sinful reactions," and Yamarāja said, "Then fall!" "At once I fell, and while falling I saw myself becoming a lizard, O master.

COMMENTARY: Let me first experience my sin since there is the greatest happiness after the end of suffering. Yama spoke while gesturing (pra-āha). Immediately I became a lizard. O controller of all karma (prabho)! I must experience the results of action given by you, or this is by your will alone. He received that result for his sin. According to Rāmāyaṇa and other scriptures he received this result because of the curse of the two brāhmaṇas. The contradiction to the version presented here is resolved by explaining that two different incidents happened in different kalpas.

Text 64.25

brahmaṇyasya vadānyasya tava dāsasya keśava
smṛtir nādyāpi vidhvastā bhavat-sandarśanārthinaḥ

O Keśava, since I am your servant and am devoted to the brāhmaṇas and generous to them, I always hankered for your audience. Therefore, even till now I have not lost my memory.

COMMENTARY: I have never lost my memory. However, he omits the subject "I" out of humility. In the lizard body and in the body of a great devatā,

which is the opposite, my memory was not destroyed. The reasons are given. I was a devotee of brāhmaṇas and moreover satisfied them with sufficient charity. Moreover, I was your servant: I attained dāsya-bhakti to you—in the form of offering my karmas to you in order to give good quality to those actions. Because of this, understanding your glories, I longed to see you since you are Keśava.

ko brahmeti samakhyāta īśohaṁ sarvadehinām
āvān tavāṅga-sambhūtau tasmat keśava-nāmavān

Ka means Brahmā. Īśa means me, the lord of all souls (Śiva). We two arise from your limbs. Thus you are called Keśava, the Lord of Brahmā and Śiva. Hari-vaṁśa

How could a person reject you and offer one's sat-karmas to someone else?

Or, since you are devoted to brāhmaṇas as witnessed by Bhṛgu, and you are generous as witnessed by Bali and even me, I offered my actions to you as a servant. In taking the body of a lizard there was a good result. Because of realizing the futility of actions like charity, which he performed because of lack of faith in hearing and because of disinclination to direct bhakti such as hearing about the Lord, he was able to meet the Lord later by the power of his determination. His desire to see the Lord was motivated by a desire for some result. It was not niṣkāma. One can infer that the cause of his desire was the attainment of Svarga. But since the Lord is generous, because he did focus on the Lord, finally he would attain the supreme destination.

satyaṁ diśaty arthitam arthito nṛṇāṁ
naivārthado yat punar arthitā yataḥ
svayaṁ vidhatte bhajatām anicchatām
icchāpidhānaṁ nija-pāda-pallavam

The Lord certainly gives desired objects to devotees who request them, but he does not give those objects in such a way that the devotee will ask again after finishing his enjoyment. In other words, he gives his lotus feet, which include all desirables, to those worshippers who do not even desire them. SB 5.19.27

On seeing the Lord, those desires were uprooted. Since I was absorbed fully in serving brāhmaṇas and charity works, I was "like a servant." I had the qualities of a servant but not the variety of qualities found in the Lord's real servants. I did not desire to see the Lord because of possessing the qualities of the real servants, but only because of the general qualities of being a servant. But because of the power of realizing a portion of your qualities, even now my memory has not been destroyed. Rather it resulted in seeing you. I conclude that my actions of serving brāhmaṇas dear to you and giving charity were partially imitations arising from pride, because even today in front of you that pride appears. Previously I did not have respect for scriptures with rules followed by Ambarīśa and others. Thus those actions of charity became an obstacle. But by the power of your mercy, I have now been able to see you. Since my pride has now been broken, though I enjoy a heavenly body, because of your mercy, I will become your follower, as stated in the verse satyaṁ diśati (SB 5.19.27).

Text 64.26

sa tvaṁ kathaṁ mama vibho 'kṣi-pathaḥ parātmā
yogeśvaraiḥ śruti-dṛśāmala-hṛd-vibhāvyaḥ
sākṣād adhokṣaja uru-vyasanāndha-buddheḥ
syān me 'nudṛśya iha yasya bhavāpavargaḥ

O almighty one, how is it that my eyes see you here before me? You are the Supreme Soul, whom the greatest devotees can fix within their pure hearts only by employing the spiritual eye of the Vedas. Then how, O transcendental Lord, are you directly visible to me, since my intelligence has been blinded by the severe tribulations of material life? Only one who has finished his material entanglement in this world should be able to see you.

COMMENTARY: You are most rare or have indescribable glories (saḥ). O Lord you are spread everywhere (vibho)! Thus, you cannot be seen (akṣi-pathaḥ). You are difficult to see directly since you are with the ātmā (parātmā). You are realized by great capable devotees of bhakti (yogeśvaraiḥ). Yoga means joining with the Lord.

Or, by what method are you visible (katham akṣi-pathaḥ)? You cannot be attained just by thinking, since you are not the object of jñāna (adhokṣaja).

It is not possible that you can be directly present. I am moreover blinded by worldly problems. Therefore, you cannot be directly present since you only give a likeness to your presence (anudṛśya) to a person free of material pursuits. It is remarkable that you show yourself to me though I have attained a heavenly body, since you are beyond everything and unlimited. "How has this happened?" It is some type of mercy, some type of your śakti. You only know.

Text 64.27–28

deva-deva jagan-nātha govinda puruṣottama
nārāyaṇa hṛṣīkeśa puṇya-ślokācyutāvyaya
anujānīhi māṁ kṛṣṇa yāntaṁ deva-gatiṁ prabho
yatra kvāpi sataś ceto bhūyān me tvat-padāspadam

O Devadeva, Jagannātha, Govinda, Puruṣottama, Nārāyaṇa, Hṛṣīkeśa, Puṇyaśloka, Acyuta, Avyaya! O Kṛṣṇa, please permit me to depart for the world of the devatās. Wherever I live, O master, may my mind always take shelter of your feet.

COMMENTARY: By seeing the Lord, he developed faith in pure bhakti. Though he lacked previous acts of pure bhakti like hearing and chanting, he got to see the Lord. Preparing to request permission to depart, while praising the Lord's mercy, in two verses he first prayed to the Lord by calling out his names in praise, since nāma-kīrtana is dearest to the Lord. O Lord of the devatās! "In saying this, you who are insignificant pray with great rashness. Why are you not more restrained?" O Lord of the universe! I should pray to you since I have fallen in this material universe. "Among the people of this world, Brahmā and others are situated on Brahmaloka and have high positions. Why do you not go there?" O Govinda! By mercy you perform pastimes on earth (go). Now I should like to receive your mercy. "Even here on earth there are great souls." O best person! Taking support of your mercy to the fallen, I pray for mercy. I do not take shelter of my own qualities. Moreover you are the shelter of all jīvas (nārāyaṇa). You are the person who inspires my prayers (hṛṣīkeśa). You are the moon glorified for such mercy (puṇyaśloka). You never fail to protect the miserable who have surrendered to you (acyuta). Although you always bestow what the unlimited devotees desire, you are always complete

(avyaya). Thus my prayer is correct. “But I am indifferent, and as Bhagavān I cannot show favor to you.” You are Svayam Bhagavān (Kṛṣṇa), kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam. Therefore you are complete (vibho, another version instead of prabho).

Text 64.29

namas te sarva-bhāvāya brahmaṇe ’nanta-śaktaye
kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya yogānāṁ pataye namaḥ

I offer my repeated obeisances unto you, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva. You are the source of all beings, the Supreme Absolute Truth, the possessor of unlimited potencies, the master of all spiritual disciplines.

COMMENTARY: “In that case, stay here.” Śrīdhara Svāmī explains as follows. I offer respects to you. You are the source of everything (sarva-bhāvāya), but without change (brahmaṇe), since you have unlimited powers of māyā (ananta-śaktaye). You are the shelter of all beings, the material source of everything (vāsudevāya). You have an eternal form of bliss (kṛṣṇāya). You give the results for all actions (yogānām pataye).

Or, I can go only by being inspired by you. What can I do by my own powers? Showing how Kṛṣṇa is the inspirer of all beings, he describes his powers. You cause everyone’s actions (sarva-bhāvāya) since you are spread internally and externally (brahmaṇe). “But the jīvas move by their own will. That is clearly seen.” You are the source of their powers (ananta-śaktaye) since you preside over their citta (vāsudevāya). Therefore you are the instigator of karma, jñāna, etc. (yogānām pataye). Therefore I offer respects to you, Kṛṣṇa. With intense devotion he says namaḥ twice. I constantly offer respects.

Or, you are the cause of all beings from Brahmā to plants. You are by your nature the greatest (brahmaṇe). In terms of powers you have unlimited śaktis like māya-śakti and your svarūpa-śakti. Thus you are para-brahman in human form (kṛṣṇāya) and have appeared as the son of Vasudeva as a birth pastime, since you are the master of doing what is impossible (yogānām pataye). He offers repeated respects, since what is the use of simply standing there without qualification. He desires service.

Text 64.30

ity uktvā taṁ parikramya pādau spṛṣṭvā sva-maulinā
anujñāto vimānāgryam āruhat paśyatāṁ nṛṇām

Having spoken thus, Mahārāja Nṛga circumambulated Kṛṣṇa and touched his crown to the Lord's feet. Granted permission to depart, King Nṛga then boarded a wonderful celestial airplane as all the people present looked on.

COMMENTARY: He departed while people looked on in astonishment (paśyatāṁ nṛṇām).

Text 64.31

kṛṣṇaḥ parijanaṁ prāha bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ
brahmaṇya-devo dharmātmā rājanyān anuśikṣayan

Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī—who is especially devoted to the brāhmaṇas and who establishes dharma, then spoke to his personal associates and thus instructed the royal class in general.

COMMENTARY: Though he is Svayam Bhagavān he spoke to his close associates to show the result of offending a brāhmaṇa since he was the son of Devakī, performing human pastimes like birth and accepting them as his associates. He was the best of all (deva) who had appeared to benefit the brāhmaṇas. Not only was he the establisher of dharma, but he was also the establisher of all dharmas (dharmātmā). "Since they are his followers what is the use of teaching them. It is like grinding what is already ground." He spoke to teach other kṣatriyas who were present.

Text 64.32

durjaraṁ bata brahma-svaṁ bhuktam agner manāg api
tejīyaso 'pi kim uta rājñāṁ īśvara-māninām

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] How indigestible is the property of a brāhmaṇa, even when enjoyed just slightly and by one more potent than fire! What then to speak of kings who try to enjoy it, presuming themselves to be lords.

COMMENTARY: Enjoying (stealing) a brāhmaṇa's property produces great grief (durjaram) even for a person who can destroy sin by the power of his

austerity or yoga (tejīyasaḥ). Bata indicates dismay. What to speak of the result for kings who cannot perform austerity or yoga, because of thinking themselves great. They will come to even greater grief. Or even enjoying a small portion of a brāhmaṇa's property is indigestible for a person more powerful than fire.

Text 64.33

nāhaṁ hālāhalaṁ manye viṣaṁ yasya pratikriyā
brahma-svaṁ hi viṣaṁ proktaṁ nāsya prativihir bhuvi

I do not consider hālāhala to be real poison, because it has an antidote. But a brāhmaṇa's property, when stolen, can truly be called poison, for it has no antidote in this world.

COMMENTARY: A brāhmaṇa's property is more poisonous than poison. The poisonous effect is described with increasing intensity in two verses (33-34). Poison refers to the nature of continuous violence. A brāhmaṇa's property is said to be poison, using examples and logic (pra-uktam). There is no remedy like using gems or mantras, anywhere, by any intelligent person (bhuvi).

Text 64.34

hinasti viṣam attāraṁ vahnir adbhiḥ praśāmyati
kulaṁ sa-mūlaṁ dahati brahma-svāraṇi-pāvakaḥ

Poison kills only the person who ingests it, and an ordinary fire may be extinguished with water. But the fire generated from the kindling wood of a brāhmaṇa's property burns the thief's entire family down to the root.

COMMENTARY: Poison kills only the drinker of it, not his relatives. Fire is extinguished completely (pra-śamyati) with water. The brāhmaṇa's property is like a forest fire. All remedies do not lessen the effect at all. That fire destroys sons and grandsons as well as fathers and grandfathers (sa-mūlam).

Text 64.35

brahma-svaṁ duranujñātaṁ bhuktaṁ hanti tri-pūruṣam
prasahya tu balād bhuktaṁ daśa pūrvān daśāparān

If a person enjoys a brāhmaṇa's property without receiving due permission, that property destroys three generations of his family. But if he takes it by force or gets the government or other outsiders to help him usurp it, then ten generations of his ancestors and ten generations of his descendants are all destroyed.

COMMENTARY: This verse describes how much destruction takes place.

Text 64.36

rājāno rāja-lakṣmyāndhā nātma-pātaṁ vicakṣate
nirayaṁ ye 'bhimanyante brahma-svaṁ sādhu bāliśāḥ

Members of the royal order, blinded by royal opulence, fail to foresee their own downfall. Childishly hankering to enjoy a brāhmaṇa's property, they are actually hankering to go to hell.

COMMENTARY: The king, his family, servants and others (rājānaḥ), blinded by royal wealth, who are foolish, who strongly (sādhu) desire the property of a brāhmaṇa, do not see their fall to hell. Sādhu can also modify bāliśāḥ: they are extremely foolish.

Text 64.37–38

gṛhṇanti yāvataḥ pāṁśūn krandatām aśru-bindavaḥ
viprāṇāṁ hṛta-vṛttīnām vadānyānāṁ kuṭumbinām
rājāno rāja-kulyāś ca tāvato 'bdān niraṅkuśāḥ
kumbhī-pākeṣu pacyante brahma-dāyāpahāriṇaḥ

For as many years as there are particles of dust touched by the tears of generous brāhmaṇas who have dependent families and whose property is stolen, uncontrolled kings who usurp a brāhmaṇa's property are cooked, along with their royal families, in the hell known as Kumbhīpāka.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa describes hellish life in two verses. These brāhmaṇas, welcomed guests (vadānyānām), had their wealth stolen, and then cried in sorrow because they were unable to maintain their families without that wealth. In order to show the number of years in hell this description is given. However, even if the brāhmaṇa does not weep, the same hellish

result occurs. Kings who are independent and who steal the brāhmaṇa's wealth, are cooked by Yama's servants in each one of the Kumbīpāka hells for as many years as there are brāhmaṇa's tears in the dust.

Text 64.39

sva-dattāṁ para-dattāṁ vā brahma-vṛttiṁ harec ca yaḥ
ṣaṣṭi-varṣa-sahasrāṇi viṣṭhāyāṁ jāyate kṛmiḥ

Whether he takes the brāhmaṇa's wealth or it is given to him, he will take birth as a worm in feces for sixty thousand years.

COMMENTARY: Even after the hellish punishment, his life is miserable. Particulars of the theft are given. For sixty thousand years he will again and again be born as a worm.

Text 64.40

na me brahma-dhanaṁ bhūyād yad gṛdhvālpāyuṣo narāḥ
parājitāś cyutā rājyād bhavanty udvejino 'hayaḥ

I do not desire brāhmaṇas' wealth obtained by force or trickery and offered to me. Those persons become short-lived and are defeated. They lose their kingdoms and in the next life become snakes, who trouble others.

COMMENTARY: Not only does the person suffer a low birth, but in both this life and the next he suffers even though he wants to avoid this by his strength or trickery. In order to show fear to others, the Lord himself shows fear with extreme disgust. Let this theft not be done for me or related to me, since it is done with violence or devious desires, with a desire that I accept it. In this life he has a short life, is defeated by enemies, loses his kingdom and in the next life becomes a snake, which gives trouble to others and receives trouble himself. He experiences suffering for a long time. Instead of nṛpā sometimes narā is seen.

Text 64.41

vipraṁ kṛtāgasam api naiva druhyata māmakāḥ
ghnantaṁ bahu śapantaṁ vā namas-kuruta nityaśaḥ

My dear followers, never treat a learned brāhmaṇa harshly, even if he has sinned. Even if he attacks you physically or repeatedly curses you, always continue to offer him obeisances.

COMMENTARY: "If the brāhmaṇa steals my money or becomes hostile, what should be done?" Do not desire to kill him or harm (ghanatam) him, at all, at any time (eva). That is rejected. O people who follow me, you should not harm him. Otherwise you are not my followers. You will not be protected by me.

Text 64.42

yathāhaṁ praṇame viprān anukālaṁ samāhitaḥ
tathā namata yūyaṁ ca yo 'nyathā me sa daṇḍa-bhāk

Just as I always carefully bow down to brāhmaṇas, so all of you should likewise bow down to them. I will punish anyone who acts otherwise.

COMMENTARY: One should not offer obeisances with disrespect or offense, but with devotion. Just as I always (anukālam) offer respects with attention to all brāhmaṇas, you should offer respects. Anyone who does otherwise will be punished by me—by Yama after death, and directly by me.

Text 64.43

brāhmaṇārtho hy apahṛto hartāraṁ pātayaty adhaḥ
ajānantam api hy enaṁ nṛgaṁ brāhmaṇa-gaur iva

When a brāhmaṇa's property is stolen, it certainly causes the person who takes it to fall down, even if he does so by accident, just as the brāhmaṇa's cow did to Nṛga.

COMMENTARY: That the cow was taken from the brāhmaṇa was not known to Nṛga, but was understood by the people listening to the story.

Text 64.44

evaṁ viśrāvya bhagavān mukundo dvārakaukasaḥ
pāvanaḥ sarva-lokānāṁ viveśa nija-mandiram

Having thus instructed the residents of Dvārakā, Mukunda, who wanted to purify of all the people, entered his palace.

COMMENTARY: He instructed the inhabitants of Dvārakā and other also. The purpose of the story is explained. He wanted to purify the people (pāvanaḥ) by instructions concerning correct behavior.

Chapter Sixty-five
Balarāma goes to Vṛndāvana

Text 65.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
balabhadraḥ kuru-śreṣṭha bhagavān ratham āsthitaḥ
suhṛd-didṛkṣur utkaṇṭhaḥ prayayau nanda-gokulam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O best of the Kurus, once Balarāma, eager to visit his well-wishing friends, mounted his chariot and traveled to Nanda Gokula.

COMMENTARY: Understanding that Parīkṣit, though blissful because of Kṛṣṇa's various pastimes, was disturbed on remembering the pain experienced by Gokula's inhabitants produced by Kṛṣṇa's sudden departure from Gokula, Śukadeva tells a story to console him, leaving other stories aside. He praises Parīkṣit with "O best of the Kurus!"

Balarāma, the Supreme Lord, desired to see his friends Nanda and others, for whom he had more pure affection as his father and relatives than he had for Vasudeva and other Yadus. Suhṛdaḥ means "those in whose hearts (hṛd) there was splendor (su) because of affection with identification as Kṛṣṇa's father, mother, etc." Desiring to see them, he went to Gokula. Previously he longed to go see them with feelings of separation for a long time, but now he got permission from Kṛṣṇa. Hari-vaṁśa says:

kasyacid atha kālasya smṛtvā gopeṣu sauhṛdam
jagāmaiko vrajaṁ rāmaḥ kṛṣṇasyānumate sthitaḥ

Remembering the deep friendship he once enjoyed with the cowherd folk, Balarāma went alone to Vraja, having taken Kṛṣṇa's permission.

It will be said later that at this time Kṛṣṇa gave permission so that Balarāma could console them with messages from Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa also had a desire to go with Balarāma but Vasudeva would not permit him to go since he feared Kṛṣṇa would stay there, since Kṛṣṇa was bound to Nanda and others with prema. He thus sent Balarāma alone in order to hide his message to Nanda

that he would also come there. Understanding their feelings, Balarāma went (pra-yayau), wearing a cowherd dress. Hari-vaṁśa describes this:

sa praviṣṭaḥ tu vegena taṁ vrajaṁ kṛṣṇa-pūrvajaḥ
vanyena ramaṇīyena veṣeṇālaṁkṛtaḥ prabhuḥ

Balarāma quickly entered Vraja, ornamented with attractive rustic clothing. He went on his chariot since, because of his intense longing, he wanted to go quickly.

Text 65.2

pariṣvaktaś cirotkaṇṭhair gopair gopībhir eva ca
rāmo 'bhivādya pitarāv āśīrbhir abhinanditaḥ

Having long suffered the anxiety of separation, the cowherd men and their wives embraced Balarāma. The Lord then offered respects to his parents, and they joyfully greeted him with blessings.

COMMENTARY: This verse describes their exchange of feelings. They embraced deeply with all their limbs, with tears and hairs standing on end because of their longing held for an extended period. First he responded to his parents' love appropriately. Within Vraja he met with the various cowherds, cowherd women, friends, elders, and also the priests. First meeting his parents, he greeted them, and was embraced by them and received their blessings.

Text 65.3

ciraṁ naḥ pāhi dāśārha sānujo jagad-īśvaraḥ
ity āropyāṅkam āliṅgya netraiḥ siṣicatur jalaiḥ

[Nanda and Yaśodā prayed,] "O descendant of Daśārha, O Lord of the universe, may you and your younger brother Kṛṣṇa ever protect us." Saying this, they raised Balarāma onto their laps, embraced him and moistened him with tears from their eyes.

COMMENTARY: "Protect us for a long time" indicates that they blessed Balarāma with long life and strength. Calling him Lord of the universe is also a blessing. Though they were also Dāśārhas, they describe him as such to indicate him as the son of Vasudeva since he was the chief of the Yadus, distinguishing him from Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas. Though Nanda had more

affection for Kṛṣṇa as his own son, he protected Balarāma as his own son also, since he regarded his brother's son as his own. This showed Nanda's intense affection for Vasudeva, thinking of Vasudeva as himself. Thus he regarded Balarāma as his own son. By saying "with your younger brother (sānujaḥ)" he indicated again that he regarded Balarāma as his son. He took Balarāma as the main son and Kṛṣṇa as secondary by saying "along with your younger brother." In saying "please protect us" he indicated without distinction "all of us Yādavas." Or in embracing him out of longing, at this moment he thought it inappropriate to disregard the others in Dvārakā and to think only of the people of Vraja. Protect the Yādavas and protect us.

Text 65.4–6

gopa-vṛddhāṁś ca vidhi-vad yaviṣṭhair abhivanditaḥ
yathā-vayo yathā-sakhyaṁ yathā-sambandham ātmanaḥ
samupetyātha gopālān hāsya-hasta-grahādibhiḥ
viśrāntam sukham āsīnaṁ papracchuḥ paryupāgatāḥ
pṛṣṭāś cānāmayaṁ sveṣu prema-gadgadayā girā
kṛṣṇe kamala-patrākṣe sannyastākhila-rādhasaḥ

Balarāma then paid proper respects to the elder cowherd men, and the younger ones all greeted him respectfully. He met them all with smiles, handshakes and so on, dealing personally with each one according to age, degree of friendship, and family relationship. Then, after resting, the Lord accepted a comfortable seat, and they all gathered around him. With voices faltering out of love for him, those cowherds, who had dedicated everything to lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, asked about the health of their dear ones [in Dvārakā], and Balarāma in turn asked about the cowherds' welfare.

COMMENTARY: The verse describes his meeting with Nanda's associates (elders). Then the next day (atha) he met closely (upetya) with his cowherd friends with affection and respect (sam), going personally to their houses with laughing and holding hands, according to age. After eating he sat comfortably while they all rested after their services. They all sat around him and asked about the health of the Yadus, according to their age and friendship with Balarāma. Others also, according to the relationship as sons

of his uncle, etc., according to age and friendship (yathā-vayo yathā-sakhyaṁ yathā-sambandham ātmanaḥ), came and asked questions. “Laughing and holding hands” refers to his friends. They showed mutual joy because they constantly had sphūrtis of his presence in secret, as explained when Uddhava had come. The word ādi indicates bowing to elders and other courtesies.

sa tān abhaṣāta prītyā yathāpūrvaṁ arindama
gopāns tenaiva vidhinā yathā nyāyaṁ yathā vayaḥ
tathaiva prāha tān sarvān tathaiva pariharṣayan
tathaiva saha gopībhī yojayan madhurāḥ kathāḥ

He spoke to them with affection as he had done as previously, correctly, according to rules and age. He spoke to them, giving them all joy. Then he met with the gopīs and spoke sweet topics. Hari-vaṁśa

Then he asked them about the people of Vraja. They asked him and then he asked them, both with choked words, out of prema. They had given up everything for Kṛṣṇa, who attracted everyone with his beauty, including his lotus eyes. He first attracted them with his blissful form and then took away all their miseries (kṛṣṇe).

eṣāṁ ghoṣa-nivāsināṁ uta bhavān kiṁ deva rāteti naś
ceto viśva-phalāt phalaṁ tvad-aparaṁ kutrāpy ayan muhyati
sad-veṣād iva pūtanāpi sa-kulā tvām eva devāpitā
yad-dhāmārtha-suhṛt-priyātma-tanaya-prāṇāśayās tvat-kṛte

O Lord! What can you give to the people of Vraja whose houses, possessions, friends, dear ones, bodies, sons, life airs and hearts are dedicated only to you, since there is nothing superior to you or Vraja (which you have already given)? Thinking of this my mind becomes bewildered. You awarded yourself even to Pūtanā and her family members because she wore the disguise of a nurse. SB 10.14.35

Previously they had given up everything out of attachment to him. Now in separation they naturally had no taste for their possessions but out of expectation that he would return they kept their possessions. They then heard of his battles with demons. In order to destroy obstacles for him, they gave up household goods (rādhasaḥ) to the devatās and brāhmaṇas as acts of charity. Now they asked about the health of his assistants in battling

the demons. Balarāma asked them about their health since he was worried about them and was compassionate to them since they had given up everything. Śukadeva, on remembering their ensuing difficulties, lost control of his senses.

Text 65.7

kaccin no bāndhavā rāma sarve kuśalam āsate
kaccit smaratha no rāma yūyaṁ dāra-sutānvitāḥ

[The cowherds said:] O Rāma, are all our relatives doing well? And Rāma, do all of you, with your wives and children, still remember us?

COMMENTARY: Clarifying the questions of the cowherds, the very elderly ask this question. Are the Yādavas well and sometimes do you along with your wives and children remember us? Yuyam (you two) indicates Balarāṁa and Kṛṣṇa. It is understood that after the two brothers had children, Kṛṣṇa still did not come there. However, by the mention of Kaṁsa being killed it should be understood that when Balarāma came it was not many years after that incident. Thus the eldest children only had been born. Viṣṇu Purāṇa says:

vivāhāt prāg eve kālayavana-vadhārthaṁ mathurām āgatayos tad vadhe
vṛtte tataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇasya dvārakāyāṁ gamanam asya ca gokule

Previous to marriage the two came to Mathurā to kill Kālayavana. After that when Kṛṣṇa lived in Dvārakā Balarāma went to Gokula.

However in Hari-vaṁśa it is said that when Śṛgāla-vāsudeva was killed in a battle at Gomanta near Karavīra[1] the two came to Mathurā and then Balarāma went to Gokula. This is understood to be from a different kalpa. He came and met the people of Vraja not long after leaving Vraja.

Text 65.8

diṣṭyā kaṁso hataḥ pāpo diṣṭyā muktāḥ suhṛj-janāḥ
nihatya nirjitya ripūn diṣṭyā durgaṁ samāśrītāḥ

It is our great fortune that sinful Kaṁsa has been killed and our dear relatives freed. And it is also our good fortune that our relatives have killed and defeated their enemies and found complete security in a great fortress.

COMMENTARY: The friends of Nanda ask this question. In thinking of the well-being of their relatives they ignore their own suffering. Now they also gave great respect to the welfare of the Yādavas because they helped Kṛṣṇa. How much more regard they gave to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma! First they spoke of the pastime of killing Kaṁsa. Then they spoke of their friends being freed, which produced happiness for themselves as well, since then the Yādavas could help the two brothers defeat more demons. They praised the event using the word diṣṭyā (by good fortune.) It is our good fortune that other demons were defeated or killed and that the Yadus took shelter of a fortress, since it stopped the anxiety that the remaining demons could attack again, though this has made it more difficult for you to return. Even though it was difficult for you to come, we are happy. Hari-vaṁśa describes the meeting:

tam ūcuḥ sthavirā gopāḥ priyaṁ madhura-bhāṣiṇaḥ
rāmaṁ ramayatāṁ śreṣṭhaṁ pravāsāt punar āgatam
svāgataṁ te mahābāho yadūnāṁ kula-nandana
adyā sma nirvṛtās tāta yat tvāṁ paśyāmahe vayam
prītāś caiva vayaṁ vīra yat tvaṁ punar ihāgataḥ
tridaśānāṁ vayaṁ mānyā dhruvam adyāmalānana
ye sma dṛṣṭās tvayā tāta kāṅkṣamāṇās tavāgamam
tava cāgamanaṁ dṛṣṭvā sabhāgyāḥ sma yathā purā
pratyuvāca tato rāmaḥ sarvāṁs tān abhitaḥ sthitān
yādaveṣv api sarveṣu bhavanto mama bāndhavāḥ
ity āvayor gataṁ bālyam ihā caivāvayoratam
bhavadhir varddhitās caiva yāsyāmo vikriyām kathaṁ
gṛheṣu bhavatāṁ bhuktaṁ gāvaś ca pari-rakṣitāḥ
asmākaṁ bāndhavāḥ sarve bhavanto baddha-sauhṛdāḥ

The older cowherds said affectionately with sweet words to Balarāma, the best of those who give pleasure, who had come back after going elsewhere, “O joy to the dynasty of the Yadus! Welcome mighty warrior. We are joyful to see you today. O warrior! We are pleased that you have again come here. O Balarāma with a pure face! We are certainly honored by the gods. O child! We whom you see were anxious for your return. Seeing you come, we are fortunate like before.”

Balarāma replied to the people of Vraja, who had surrounded him. “Among all the Yādavas you are my friends. We passed our childhood here and played together here. Nourished by you, how can we harm you? We ate in your houses and we herded the cows. You are all our friends, bound in deep friendship to us.”

In saying that he went and returned, they indicate that Vraja is his actual home. O joy to the dynasty of Yadus. That includes the cowherds. Their use of the word tvām (you) indicates that Balarāma is affectionate to them. Tava ca “seeing you come we are fortunate” indicates that you are merciful to us, but Kṛṣṇa is indifferent. Balarāma then indicated that he accepted them as Yādavas, showing pure affection to them as his parents. He then emphasized that he and Kṛṣṇa were one by saying “the two of us.” I passed my childhood in Vraja just as he did. Ratam means playing. The plural varddhitāḥ (we were raised by you) is used instead of the singular to show his respect for them. He did not use the dual number since that would show disrespect for Kṛṣṇa. The cause of being friends with the cowherds is their natural affection (baddha-sauhṛdāḥ). They maintained parental affection in spite of being upset by his leaving. He indicated by his statement that the pain of separation should no longer remain.

Text 65.9

gopyo hasantyaḥ papracchū rāma-sandarśanādṛtāḥ
kaccid āste sukhaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ pura-strī-jana-vallabhaḥ

Honored to have the personal audience of Balarāma, the young gopīs, smiled and asked him, “Is Kṛṣṇa, the darling of the city women, living happily?

COMMENTARY: The gopīs mentioned here are those who were dedicated to Kṛṣṇa. They would meet secretly together at all times in order to hear news of him. They went to Balarāma in a group to tell him to bring Kṛṣṇa as they had done when meeting Uddhava. Though they were still aggrieved, they laughed. This is a symptom of unmāda. They laughed in order to mock Kṛṣṇa. They inquired from his elder brother because of great longing for Kṛṣṇa who was also in a state of unmāda. According to Śrīdhara Svāmī they showed respect (ādṛtaḥ) on seeing Balarāma by offering obeisances. Or they were honored with the direct presence of Balarāma who was more

intimate with Kṛṣṇa than Uddhava. This was better than previous internal sphūrtis. Though having full faith that Kṛṣṇa would return, they laughed with hatred because he had left them. Still, because of their natural pure prema, they just made the following inquiry since he was their only happiness: Is he happy? "How can he be happy without you?" Having obtained city women, distant from country women, he can be happy. Or does he remember our worship, incidentally (anu), after associating with the city women?

Text 65.10

kaccit smarati vā bandhūn pitaraṁ mātaraṁ ca saḥ
apy asau mātaraṁ draṣṭuṁ sakṛd apy āgamiṣyati
api vā smarate 'smākam anusevāṁ mahā-bhujaḥ

"Does he remember his family members, especially his father and mother? Do you think he will ever come back even once to see his mother? And does mighty-armed Kṛṣṇa remember the service we always did for him?

COMMENTARY: Though his happiness is our happiness, he should remember those who are dear to him. With this in mind they inquire. Does he remember his friends like Śrīdāmā? With doubt, this question indicates their lamentation. Does he remember how we constantly worshipped him? Repetition of the word vā indicates their sorrow. Sarcastically they say "that persons with strong arms." A great person with such characteristics would definitely remember. Out of longing with intense love, they mention three types of persons of increasing excellence: cowherd friends, father and mother. Let him forget his friends. But how can he forget his father? They mention themselves last, separately, out of humility and feeling lowly.

Text 65.11–12

mātaraṁ pitaraṁ bhrātṝn patīn putrān svasṝn api
yad-arthe jahima dāśārha dustyajān sva-janān prabho
tā naḥ sadyaḥ parityajya gataḥ sañchinna-sauhṛdaḥ
kathaṁ nu tādṛśaṁ strībhir na śraddhīyeta bhāṣitam

“For Kṛṣṇa’s sake, O descendant of Daśārha, we abandoned our mothers, fathers, brothers, husbands, children and sisters, even though these family relations are difficult to give up. But now, O Lord, that same Kṛṣṇa has suddenly abandoned us and gone away, breaking off all affectionate ties with us. And yet how could any woman fail to trust his promises?

COMMENTARY: “He will always remember his wives.” By leaving us who had no other shelter, all traces of friendship disappeared in him. Our mothers, etc., and friends (sva-janān) were difficult to give up. The order of affection is from the strongest in the mother to weakest in friends. Affection for brothers is less than affection for fathers. The gopīs gave no regard to these people, what to speak of having regard for anything else. From what they previously said, it is understood that they had rejected these people:

pati-sutānvaya-bhrātṛ-bāndhavān
ativilaṅghya te ’nty acyutāgatāḥ
gati-vidas tavodgīta-mohitāḥ
kitava yoṣitaḥ kas tyajen niśi

Who but a cheater like you would abandon young women who come to see you in the middle of the night, enchanted by the loud song of your flute, though you know the nature of your flute, and though we have completely rejected our husbands, children, mothers, fathers, and brothers to come to you, O Acyuta! SB 10.31.16

Now, gathering in a group, when he had given them up, they went to live in the forest. That is the meaning of the word jahima (we renounce). Since they were not living in their houses, now they had no brothers. As for husbands and sons, this must be taken only in a secondary sense, according to what was well known to the public. Since he is Kṛṣṇa’s elder brother, they addressed Balarāma by saying, “O master of everyone!” (They did not recognize him as the Lord.) They gave up the shame of informing someone else of Kṛṣṇa’s bad conduct and approached him. O Dāśārha! Though you were born in the Yadu dynasty as a kṣatriya, you have come out of friendship—but the son of the cowherd king did not come.

He gave up completely those who gave up countless friends, or those who were devoted solely to him (tāḥ) and went away. “But he went to kill evil Kaṁsa. After finishing up some necessary duties at this time, soon he will

come back." That is not likely. He completely cut the ties of affection he had for us (sañchinna-sauhṛdaḥ). Otherwise how could he give us up? He spoke sweetly, gently and vowed to us, "I cannot repay you." How could such words not be believed by women who were soft and innocent? Or, "How could you have friendship for him, which gives you such pain?" They answer by saying, "How could innocent women not believe his sweet words?"

Text 65.13

kathaṁ nu gṛhṇanty anavasthitātmano
vacaḥ kṛta-ghnasya budhāḥ pura-striyaḥ
gṛhṇanti vai citra-kathasya sundara-
smitāvalokocchvasita-smarāturāḥ

"How can intelligent city women possibly trust the words of one whose heart is so unsteady and who is so ungrateful? They must believe him because he speaks so wonderfully and also because his beautiful smiling glances arouse their desire.

COMMENTARY: Being unintelligent we believed his words. But city women are intelligent. How could they believe him? Wounded internally by the pain arising from their prema, they speak. Nu indicates amazement. How could city women accept or believe his words? They should not. "Why?" His heart is not steady and he destroys (ghna) the friendship made with us and others. Because they are city women they are intelligent. Still it has happened. Ah, we can understand after remembering (vai). Even without hearing his words they become bewildered—by his smile and his glance. That we remember. Or when he speaks on various attractive topics and they become afflicted with desire by his beautiful smile and glances, they lose their power of discrimination.

Text 65.14

kiṁ nas tat-kathayā gopyaḥ kathāḥ kathayatāparāḥ
yāty asmābhir vinā kālo yadi tasya tathaiva naḥ

"Why bother talking about him, dear gopīs? Please talk of something else. If he passes his time without us, then we shall similarly pass ours

without him."

COMMENTARY: Afflicted by intense grief, they speak to each other. There is no use in speaking about him. We will just suffer by doing so. O gopīs, with soft, innocent natures! "But it is a fact that we cannot give him up. Ah! We are afflicted with grief. What should we do?" Speak about something else. According to the principle of "the best medicine for relieving great lamentation is not thinking of it" it is possible to overcome grief by covering that subject with a different topic. We should not think that without him we cannot pass our time. Just as he can pass his time without us, we can pass time without him (tathaiva). From the time of separation till now, not one of us has died. Or, just as he is happily passing his time, we can also pass our time happily. Showing a lack of grief in spite of great grief indicates even greater inner grief because of tolerating it.

Text 65.15

iti prahasitaṁ śaurer jalpitaṁ cāru-vīkṣitam
gatiṁ prema-pariṣvaṅgaṁ smarantyo ruruduḥ striyaḥ

While speaking these words, the young cowherd women remembered Kṛṣṇa's laughter, his pleasing conversations with them, his attractive glances, his style of walking and his loving embraces. Thus they began to cry.

COMMENTARY: Thus (iti) they remembered his smile. The affix pra indicates the start of a smile. The word cāru (beautiful) should be understood with all his features they remembered. They remembered his embrace of all their limbs with his prema. Or, prema can indicate "soft with affection." The list is in order of features that will make them cry more intensely. They call him a member of the kṣatriya clan (śaureḥ) out of anger since now he ignores the cowherd women. The word striyaḥ indicates that they had lost all discrimination.

Text 65.16

saṅkarṣaṇas tāḥ kṛṣṇasya sandeśair hṛdayaṁ-gamaiḥ
sāntvayām āsa bhagavān nānānunaya-kovidaḥ

The Supreme Lord Balarāma, the attractor of all, being expert at various kinds of conciliation, consoled the gopīs by relaying to them the confidential messages Kṛṣṇa had sent with him. These messages deeply touched the gopīs' hearts.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma was completely capable (bhagavān) to console them by means of Kṛṣṇa's messages. As his elder brother (saṅkarṣaṇaḥ) he was the object of respect. He was learned in methods of conciliation using various techniques. He began to console them with his conciliatory techniques. Since Kṛṣṇa attracts everyone's heart by his nature, why would his messages not attract their hearts? He consoled them with Kṛṣṇa's messages because they entered into those messages, which melted their hearts. Though they were controlled by unmāda, in verse 9 they asked, "Is he happy with the city women." They considered happiness to be the happiness of his well-wishers and his happiness. In verse 10 they asked "Does he remember our service?" They felt themselves successful just by his remembrance of their previous service. Now, they had given up mothers and fathers for him and showed their pure devotion for him by imploring his elder brother (verse 11). They revealed their unflinching friendship with him in verse 12. They proved their complete devotion to him by showing that any women would believe him. They then showed his unsteadiness and ungratefulness (verse 13) and confirmed their unwavering devotion to him. They then indicated that their hearts were stolen by showing how even the city women would be attracted to his smile and glance. In verse 14, because of intolerable grief, they decided to give up talking about him. But the Śukadeva explains that, by absorption in an ocean of affection for him, they then began crying.

This is the significance of the word tāḥ in the verse. From the evening of the killing of Dhenuka till they went to Kurukṣetra, they are described as being dedicated to Kṛṣṇa alone. Kṛṣṇa himself describes their great anurāga for him alone:

rāmeṇa sārdhaṁ mathurāṁ praṇīte
śvāphalkinā mayy anurakta-cittāḥ
vigāḍha-bhāvena na me viyoga-
tīvrādhayo 'nyaṁ dadṛśuḥ sukhāya

The residents of Vṛndāvana, headed by the gopīs, were always completely attached to me with the deepest love. Therefore, when my uncle Akrūra brought my brother Balarāma and me to the city of Mathurā, the residents of Vṛndāvana suffered extreme mental distress because of separation from me and could not find any other source of happiness. SB 11.12.10

It should be understood therefore that the gopīs mentioned in the next verse are different from the ones just described.

According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, Balarāma first consoled them with scriptural teachings. Then he praised them to remove their despondency. Then he described Kṛṣṇa's mercy directed to them. Then he described with regret various events which delayed Kṛṣṇa from returning. Then he promised to bring Kṛṣṇa back with a believable oath. Then he frightened them by saying that Kṛṣṇa, who held them dearer than a million of his lives, would suffer intense grief on hearing of their crying. Viṣṇu Purāṇa describes his heart-rending message:

sandeśaiḥ sāma-madhuraiḥ prema-garbhair agarvitaiḥ
rāmeṇāśvāsitā gopyaḥ kṛṣṇasyātimanoharaiḥ

Balarāma appeased the gopīs with Kṛṣṇa's sweet, consoling attractive messages filled with prema and devoid of pride.

These sweet words of consolation (sāma) were praises of the gopīs. He gave praises such as "I cannot repay your debt." He gave consolation such as "I will quickly return." He spoke words of prema such as "But the actual reason why I, the beloved object of your sight, have stayed far away from you is that I wanted to intensify your meditation upon me and thus draw your minds closer to me." SB 10.47.34 He spoke prideless words such as "Therefore please let your own glorious deeds be your compensation." (SB 10.32.22) Lastly, the words were most attractive because they indicated that Kṛṣṇa was eternally united with them in his special manifestation.

Saṅkarṣaṇa then consoled them by attracting Kṛṣṇa with his mind (karṣaṇa) and gave some of them the realization of Kṛṣṇa's presence. He consoled them completely. Thus it was suitable that he would then have pastimes with his own gopīs, as is described next. He could have pastimes with them because he was omniscient (bhagavān). He was endowed with all powers of happiness as well as knowledge of their eternal position as his consorts

(other gopīs). Any other explanation would result in loss of respect for him in Dvārakā. Sending Balarāma with the messages was a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's friendship with Balarāma. That was proper since they were the same age and from infancy played together. Kṛṣṇa gently hinted at Balarāma's separate pastimes. Gopyo 'ntareṇa bhujayor api yat-spṛhā śrīḥ: you have embraced the young cowherd women between your two arms. (SB 10.15.8) Balarāma also showed his nature as an elder brother when Śaṅkhacūḍa approached. Without trembling he stayed to protect the gopīs who almost died of fright.

Text 65.17

dvau māsau tatra cāvātsīn madhuṁ mādhavaṁ eva ca
rāmaḥ kṣapāsu bhagavān gopīnāṁ ratim āvahan

Balarāma resided there for the two months of Madhu and Mādhava, and during the nights he gave his cowherd girlfriends conjugal pleasure.

COMMENTARY: According to the principle enunciated by the word tāḥ in the previous verse, those gopīs were dedicated to Kṛṣṇa alone. The gopīs mentioned in the present verse were other gopīs dedicated only to Balarāma. Words which indicate general qualities should be explained according to context. For instance of one says "Brāhmaṇas should be respected" this applies to all brāhmaṇas. But if one says, "The brāhmaṇas should be hidden," this would apply to brāhmaṇas in a certain situation and not to all brāhmaṇas or other brāhmaṇas. Similarly a word with various meanings should take the meaning most suitable to the circumstance. If one says, "Bring the saindhava," normally this would mean, "Bring the salt," instead of, "Bring the king of Sindh."

Thus the word gopī does not always mean Kṛṣṇa's consorts. Gopyaś cākarṇya muditā yaśodāyāḥ sutodbhavam: the gopī wives of the cowherd men were very pleased to hear that mother Yaśodā had given birth to a son. (SB 10.5.9) Gopyas tūrṇaṁ samabhyetya jagṛhur jāta-sambhramāḥ: gopīs immediately came forward with great jubilation and picked Kṛṣṇa up. (SB 10.6.18) Ruditam anuniśamya tatra gopyah: Yaśodā's friends, the other gopīs, approached mother Yaśodā, hearing her pitiful crying. (SB 10.7.25) Kṛṣṇasya gopyo ruciraṁ vīkṣya kaumāra-cāpalam: all the elder gopīs saw the very attractive childish restlessness of Kṛṣṇa. (SB 10.8.28) Gopy ādade

tvayi kṛtāgasi dāma tāvad: my dear Kṛṣṇa, Yaśodā took up a rope to bind you when you committed an offense. (SB 1.8.31) Prasādaṁ lebhire gopī: such mercy was received by mother Yaśodā. (SB 10.9.20) Pariṣvaktaś cirotkaṇṭhair gopair gopībhir eva ca: having long suffered the anxiety of separation, the cowherd men and their wives embraced Balarāma. (SB 10.65.2) They embraced him out of great confusion due to separation. It should not be thought that in the present context the gopīs referred to are Kṛṣṇa's gopīs.

Similarly, in the Fifth Canto (SB 5.11.12-13), there are contiguous statements (verses 12-13) with the word kṣetra-jña, but the word means jīva in the first instance and God in the second instance. The submersion of the earth during Svāyambhuva's period was different from the submersion of the earth during the killing of Hiraṇyakṣa though the two stories are mixed. Thus the gopīs referenced by the word tāḥ in the previous verse does not refer to the gopīs mentioned in this verse because of the reasons previously mentioned. If they were, it would have created a scandal in Dvārakā. What more need be said.

Now the present pastime is explained. Having completely consoled Kṛṣṇa's dear gopīs, he enjoyed with other gopīs of Balarāma's group about whom Kṛṣṇa joked during their kaumāra period, foreseeing their future intimate relationship, by saying "You have embraced the young cowherd women between your two arms." (SB 10.15.8) These gopīs mingled with Kṛṣṇa's gopīs during the events leading to the killing of Śaṅkhacūḍa and the Holikā pastimes. Previously they maintained their chastity by not associating with Balarāma. With the consent of Kṛṣṇa, by his request, Balarāma pacified his own gopīs for two months. The word ca indicates a different subject. It was said in verse 1 that he went to Vraja, desiring to see his friends. That was his principle aim. Secondarily he enjoyed with his own gopīs. He did this at night, in a most secret way, far way, on the bank of the Yamunā, for he was suitable for enjoying (rāmaḥ) and he was Bhagavān. Thus he enjoyed with many gopīs.

Text 65.18

pūrṇa-candra-kalā-mṛṣṭe kaumudī-gandha-vāyunā
yamunopavane reme sevite strī-gaṇair vṛtaḥ

In the company of numerous women, Balarāma enjoyed in a garden by the Yamunā River. This garden was bathed in the rays of the full moon and caressed by breezes bearing the fragrance of night-blooming lotuses.

COMMENTARY: The details are given. By Balarāma's will, the nights always had the full moon.

Text 65.19

varuṇa-preṣitā devī vāruṇī vṛkṣa-koṭarāt
patantī tad vanaṁ sarvaṁ sva-gandhenādhyavāsayat

Sent by Varuṇa, the divine Vāruṇī liquor flowed from a tree hollow and made the entire forest even more fragrant with its sweet aroma.

COMMENTARY: Vāruṇī, the presiding deity of liquor was the daughter of Varuṇa. She flowed in the form of streams from the hollow of the kadamba trees of Vṛndāvana. The deity of liquor and the liquor are considered non-different, like rivers and their deities. In order to forbid distinguishing the difference between the two, the verse states that both were present during the pastimes. Hari-vaṁśa also describes this. Samīpam preṣitā pitrā varuṇena tavānagha: O sinless one, I was sent near to you by my father Varuṇa. The place became even more fragrant than before because of this.

Text 65.20

taṁ gandhaṁ madhu-dhārāyā vāyunopahṛtaṁ balaḥ
āghrāyopagatas tatra lalanābhiḥ samaṁ papau

The wind carried to Balarāma the fragrance of that flood of sweet liquor, and when he smelled it he went to the tree. There he and his female companions drank.

COMMENTARY: Because he was very thirsty he went there and drank the liquor. He manifested special power (balāh) and forcibly made the gopīs drink it.

Text 65.21

upagīyamāno gandharvair vanitā-śobhi-maṇḍale
reme kareṇu-yūtheśo māhendra iva vāraṇaḥ

As the Gandharvas sang his glories, Balarāma enjoyed within the brilliant circle of young women. He appeared just like Indra's elephant, the lordly Airāvata, enjoying in the company of she-elephants.

Text 65.22

nedur dundubhayo vyomni vavṛṣuḥ kusumair mudā
gandharvā munayo rāmaṁ tad-vīryair īḍire tadā

At that time kettledrums resounded in the sky, the Gandharvas joyfully rained down flowers, and the great sages praised Balarāma's heroic deeds[2].

Text 65.23

upagīyamāna-carito vanitābhir halāyudha
vaneṣu vyacarat kṣīvo mada-vihvala-locanaḥ

As his deeds were sung, Halāyudha wandered as if inebriated among the various forests with his girlfriends. His eyes rolled from the effects of the liquor.

COMMENTARY: He held his plough on his shoulder. The use of the plough will be clear later. His eyes rolled because of intoxication.

Text 65.24–25

sragvy eka-kuṇḍalo matto vaijayantyā ca mālayā
bibhrat smita-mukhāmbhojaṁ sveda-prāleya-bhūṣitam
sa ājuhāva yamunāṁ jala-krīḍārtham īśvaraḥ
nijaṁ vākyam anādṛtya matta ity āpagāṁ balaḥ
anāgatāṁ halāgreṇa kupito vicakarṣa ha

Intoxicated with joy, Balarāma sported flower garlands, including the famous Vaijayantī. He wore a single earring, and beads of perspiration decorated his smiling lotus face like dew. The Lord then summoned the Yamunā River so that he could play in her waters. She disregarded his command, thinking he was drunk. This angered Balarāma, and he began dragging the river with the tip of his plow.

COMMENTARY: He wore many garlands including chaplets on his head. The Vaijayantī garland had flowers of five colors. His lotus face had a smile. He

shone with these ornaments. Hari-vaṁśa describes him as follows:

śirasā cārukeśena kiṁcid āvṛttamaulinā
śravaṇaikāvalambena kuṇḍalena virājatā
candanāgarupītena vana-mālāvalambinā
vibabhāv urasā rāmaḥ kailāseneva mandaraḥ
nīle vasāno vasane pratyag raja-dala-prabhe
rarāja vapuṣā śubhraḥ śaśīva ghana-mālayā
lāṅgalenāvasaktena bhujagābhoga-vartinā
tathā bhujāgra-śliṣṭena musalena ca bhāsvatā
sa matto balināṁ śreṣṭho rarājā ghūrṇitānanaḥ
śaiśirīṣv triyāmāsu yathā khedālasaḥ śaśī

His beautiful hair was partially covered by his crown. He had one earring in his ear. He was anointed with sandalwood paste and with a forest garland on his chest. He appeared like Mandara Mountain with Kailāṣa. He wore blue cloth, shining like a fresh lotus petal. He was brilliant white like the moon with a huge garland. With his plough he appeared like a snake with a hood. He was holding a shining pestle in his hand. The best of the strong, he was intoxicated, with rolling eyes. He was like the moon after three yamas in the cold season, and was fatigued by his sporting.

Instead of nijam another version has neti but this is not accepted by Śrīdhara Svāmī since it does not make sense in the context.

Text 65.26

pāpe tvaṁ mām avajñāya yan nāyāsi mayāhutā
neṣye tvāṁ lāṅgalāgreṇa śatadhā kāma-cāriṇīm

[Balarāma said:] O sinful one disrespecting me, you do not come when I call you but rather move only by your own whim. Therefore with the tip of my plow I shall bring you here in a hundred streams!

COMMENTARY: You move about independently, as you please. But actually you move about in many branches at your will in order to free people from sin.

Text 65.27

evaṁ nirbhartsitā bhītā yamunā yadu-nandanam
uvāca cakitā vācaṁ patitā pādayor nṛpa

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus scolded by the Lord, O King, the frightened river-goddess Yamunā came and fell at the feet of Balarāma, the beloved descendant of Yadu. Trembling, she spoke to him the following words.

COMMENTARY: Uvāca vācam is repetitious but is used because she was in the form of a river but still spoke. But she also fell at his feet and spoke in the form of the river deity—a consort of the Lord. Or, vācam can indicate special words. Since Lakṣmī has many expansions who act as the consorts of the Lord according to the particular form of the Lord, this form of the river that appeared was a great vibhūti of the Lord, a shadow form of Kālindī and a form who is the wife of the ocean. Hari-vaṁśa says pratyuvācārṇava-vadhūm: the wife of the ocean replied. As well, she is addressed in that scripture as sāgarāṅganā: wife of the ocean.

Text 65.28

rāma rāma mahā-bāho na jāne tava vikramam
yasyaikāṁśena vidhṛtā jagatī jagataḥ pate

[Goddess Yamunā said:] Rāma, Rāma, O mighty-armed one! I cannot know your full prowess. With a single portion of yourself you hold up the earth, O Lord of the universe.

COMMENTARY: O giver of enjoyment to the universe! Because you give enjoyment to the universe, you should not afflict me. She repeated his name out of fear or out of lowness to make him face her, though he was angry. O strongest person! It is not possible to know your full powers since you maintain the whole earth by just one of your expansions, not even one of your limbs. Normally the sentence should read yenaikāṁśena. Śrīdhara Svāmī thus says that this refers to Śeṣa, Balarāma's expansion.

Very easily you hold up (vi-dhṛtāḥ) the earth. You do this to protect the earth (jagat-pate). Since you hold up the earth which supports rivers like me and the ocean by one of your expansions, it is impossible for persons like me to understand your real power.

Text 65.29

paraṁ bhāvaṁ bhagavato bhagavan mām ajānatīm
moktum arhasi viśvātman prapannāṁ bhakta-vatsala

My Lord, please release me. O soul of the universe, I didn't understand your position as the Supreme Lord, but now I have surrendered unto you, O master, kind to your devotees!

COMMENTARY: You alone know your form as Mahā-saṅkarṣaṇa (paraṁ bhāvam). O omniscient lord (bhagavān)! You know everything since you are the Paramātmā (viśvātman). Therefore you should stop pulling me. "Why should I stop pulling you, since you disobeyed my order?" I have surrendered to you. You should be merciful to the surrendered. O Lord, affectionate to the devotees (bhakta-vatsala)!

Text 65.30

tato vyamuñcad yamunāṁ yācito bhagavān balaḥ
vijagāha jalaṁ strībhiḥ kareṇubhir ivebha-rāṭ

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Upon being requested, Balarāma released the Yamunā and, like the king of the elephants with his entourage of she-elephants, entered the river's water with his female companions.

COMMENTARY: He then released her while consoling her (vy-amuñcat). Śāntiṁ vraja mahābhāge gamyatāṁ ca yathāsukham: O fortunate one, go peacefully as you please. (Hari-vaṁśa) It also implies he had pulled her quite far before freeing her. Vṛndāvanasya madhye tu sā nītā yamunā-nadī: he brought the Yamunā to the middle of Vṛndāvana. (Hari-vaṁśa) Viṣṇu Purāṇa says:

sākṛṣṭā sahasā tena mārgaṁ saṁtyajya nimnagā
yatrāste balabhadro 'sau plāvayām āsa tadvanam

He pulled the river suddenly from its path. The river now flows in Vṛndāvana where he made it flow.

Balarāma then entered that portion of the river which he had pulled close.

Text 65.31

kāmaṁ vihṛtya salilād uttīrṇāyāsītāmbare
bhūṣaṇāni mahārhāṇi dadau kāntiḥ śubhāṁ srajam

The Lord played in the water to his full satisfaction, and when he came out Goddess Kānti presented him with blue garments, precious ornaments and a brilliant necklace.

COMMENTARY: Kānti is an expansion of Lakṣmī according to Viṣṇu Purāṇa. She is the wife of Saṅkarṣaṇa of the second vyūha.

Text 65.32

vasitvā vāsasī nīle mālāṁ āmucya kāñcanīm
reye sv-alaṅkṛto lipto māhendra iva vāraṇaḥ

Balarāma dressed himself in the blue garments and put on the gold necklace. Anointed with fragrances and beautifully adorned, he appeared as resplendent as Indra's royal elephant.

COMMENTARY: The meaning is clear.

Text 65.33

adyāpi dṛśyate rājan yamunākṛṣṭa-vartmanā
balasyānanta-vīryasya vīryaṁ sūcayatīva hi

Even today, O King, one can see how the Yamunā flows through the many channels created when it was dragged by the unlimitedly powerful Balarāma. This demonstrates his prowess.

COMMENTARY: By the mercy of Balarāma the river flows there even today. The river is seen (vartamanā) in the trough made by dragging of the plough. Or the river indicates to some degree (iva) Balarāma's power, by the path (vartmanā) made by pulling the plough, since he actually has unlimited powers (ananta-vīryasya). The word hi indicates that this is well known. Hari-vaṁśa describes his order:

lāṅgalākṛṣṭa-mārgās tv imaṁ me priya-darśane
deśam ambu-pradānena plāvayasvākhilaṁ śubham
lokā hi yāvat sthāsyanti tāvat sthāsyati me yaśaḥ

This path made by my plough should flood the beautiful place by spreading water. My fame shall remain as long as people remain.

Text 65.34

evaṁ sarvā niśā yātā ekeva ramato vraje
rāmasyākṣipta-cittasya mādhuryair vraja-yoṣitām

Thus for Balarāma all the nights passed like a single night as he enjoyed in Vraja, his mind enchanted by the exquisite charm and beauty of Vraja's young ladies.

COMMENTARY: It seemed like a single night because of newer and newer experiences. The gopīs were endowed with more sweetness than the women of Svarga. From far off, Kṛṣṇa sent this enjoyment to Balarāma because he was pleased in his heart with how Balarāma had appeased his gopīs. Balarāma consoled all of Kṛṣṇa's friends and even his gopīs when he came, more than they had been previously, because he revealed to them their eternal pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, understanding this, was also consoled. Balarāma says sarveṣām kuśalaṁ kṛṣṇa yeṣāṁ kuśalam icchasi: O Kṛṣṇa, all those whose good health you desired are in good health. (Hari-vaṁśa) In showing the prakaṭa pastimes, there is no detailed description of Balarāṁa leaving Vraja, since that portion was filled with suffering. Viṣṇu Purāṇa merely says māsa-dvayena yātaś ca punaḥ sa dvārakāṁ purīm: staying two months, Balarāma returned to Dvārakā. Hari-vaṁśa describes Kṛṣṇa's meeting with Balarāma:

tathaivādhvanyaveṣeṇa sopaśliṣṭo janārdanam
pratyagra-vana-mālena vakṣasābhivirājatā
sa dṛṣṭvā tūrṇam āyāntaṁ rāmaṁ lāṅgala-dhāriṇam
sahasotthāya govindo dadāv āsanam uttamam
upaviṣṭaṁ tadā rāmaṁ papraccha kuśalaṁ vraje
bāndhaveṣu ca sarveṣu goṣu caiva janārdanaḥ
pratyuvāca tato rāmo bhrātaraṁ sādhu-bhāṣiṇam
sarveṣāṁ kuśalaṁ kṛṣṇa yeṣāṁ kuśalam icchasi
tatas tayor vicitrāś ca paurāṇyaś ca kathābhavan
vasudevāgrataḥ puṇyā rāmakeśavayos tadā

Balarāma, still wearing a traveler's dress, beautiful with a new garland on his chest, embraced Kṛṣṇa. Seeing Balarāma coming quickly, Kṛṣṇa rose and offered him an excellent seat. Seeing him, Kṛṣṇa asked him about the welfare of all his friends and the cows. Balarāma answered his brother who

spoke sweetly. “O Kṛṣṇa! All those whose good health you desire, are fine.” Then the two spoke on various subjects of former times in front of Vasudeva.

Because they were in the assembly, general questions and answers were given. In private Kṛṣṇa asked about his gopīs.

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[1] This event apparently happened when Kṛṣṇa was still residing in Mathurā and Jarāsandha was attacking.

[2] Verses 21 and 22 are not in Jīva Gosvāmī’s version.

Chapter Sixty-six
Pauṇḍraka, the False Vāsudeva

Text 66.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
nanda-vrajaṁ gate rāme karūṣādhipatir nṛpa
vāsudevo 'ham ity ajño dūtaṁ kṛṣṇāya prāhiṇot

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, while Balarāma was away visiting Nanda's village of Vraja, the ruler of Karūṣa, foolishly thinking "I am the Supreme Lord, Vāsudeva," sent a messenger to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: On remember how Balarāma consoled Gokula, becoming contented in heart, he then spoke on remembering a funny incident in Dvārakā after Balarāma had gone to Vraja. When Balarāma went to Vraja, Pauṇḍraka thought Kṛṣṇa would be alone in Dvārakā. If Balarāma had been present, the incident would not have taken place since Balarāma would have become uncontrollably angry in the beginning. Pauṇḍraka announced through the messenger that he was Vāsudeva, since he was a fool (ajñah), without intelligence at all. Because of this he thought that the title of Supreme Lord had been assigned to Kṛṣṇa as it had been done for himself. Śukadeva calls out to Parīkṣit in amusement.

Text 66.2

tvaṁ vāsudevo bhagavān avatīrṇo jagat-patiḥ
iti prastobhito bālair mena ātmānam acyutam

Pauṇḍraka was emboldened by the flattery of childish men, who told him, "You are Vāsudeva, the Supreme Lord and master of the universe, who have now descended to the earth." Thus he imagined himself to be the infallible Lord.

COMMENTARY: His foolishness and sending the messenger are described in two verses (2-3). Fools praised him. "You are Vāsudeva since you pervade all beings, and you are Bhagavān, endowed with all powers. Thus you, the

Lord of the universe, have not appeared on earth." He thought he was the Lord, full of all powers (acyutam).

Text 66.3

dūtaṁ ca prāhiṇon mandaḥ kṛṣṇāyāvyakta-vartmane
dvārakāyāṁ yathā bālo nṛpo bāla-kṛto 'budhaḥ

Thus, slow-witted King Pauṇḍraka sent a messenger to the inscrutable Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā. Foolish Pauṇḍraka thought himself to be the Lord just like an unintelligent child whom other children make a king thinks he is a king.

COMMENTARY: Not only did he think this, but he sent a messenger to Dvārakā, which was filled with devatās, sages and kings. He is again called a fool out of amusement. He was completely foolish (mandaḥ) since he thought he was the Lord just as a foolish child is made into a king by other children and believes it. He sent the messenger to Kṛṣṇa whose path is not clear. Thus it was suitable to send such a message, since it was impossible for him to know the truth about Kṛṣṇa. Pauṇḍraka was foolish like a child.

Text 66.4

dūtas tu dvārakām etya sabhāyām āsthitaṁ prabhum
kṛṣṇaṁ kamala-patrākṣaṁ rāja-sandeśam abravīt

Arriving in Dvārakā, the messenger found lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa in his royal assembly and relayed the king's message to that almighty Lord.

COMMENTARY: The messenger was also a fool (tu). He went to Dvārakā, filled with amazing wealth. He spoke the message to Kṛṣṇa, Svayam Bhagavān, endowed with all powers (prabhum), endowed with the highest beauty (kamala-patrākṣam) who was seated in the assembly protected by the mighty. The three phrases prabhum, kṛṣṇam and kamala-patrākṣam, are in order of increasing excellence. These words indicate that he was worthy of being the Lord. The Lord looked at the messenger curiously with his lotus eyes which were especially bright.

Text 66.5

vāsudevo 'vatīrno 'ham eka eva na cāparaḥ
bhūtānām anukampārthaṁ tvaṁ tu mithyābhidhāṁ tyaja

[On Pauṇḍraka's behalf, the messenger said:] I am the one and only Lord Vāsudeva, and there is no other. It is I who have descended to this world to show mercy to the living beings. Therefore give up your false name.

COMMENTARY: I am the only Vāsudeva and have appeared to give mercy to all beings. There is no other Vāsudeva since there is only one Supreme Lord. Therefore give up the false name of Vāsudeva since the derivation of the word means he who lives in all beings. The meaning "son of Vasudeva" is a conventional usage only. Since I give mercy to all beings, it was not proper that you acted unfavorably to me by killing kings and their armies. Or, give up the designation of showing mercy to all beings. Otherwise, in the fight between us, there will be an affliction of all beings or of the people of Dvārakā.

Text 66.6

yāni tvam asmac-cihnāni mauḍhyād bibharṣi sātvata
tyaktvaihi māṁ tvaṁ śaraṇaṁ no ced dehi mamāhavam

O Sātvata, give up my personal symbols, which out of foolishness you now carry, and come to me for shelter. If you do not, then you must give me a battle.

COMMENTARY: He speaks further. You hold these symbols which are mine. O Sātvata, member of the Yadu clan! He says this in disrespect. There is another real meaning to the previous verse. I have not descended to show mercy to all beings because I am inferior, insignificant (aparaḥ). You alone have appeared as Vāsudeva. Make me give up my false designation, like thinking a shell is a silver.

In verse 20 the Lord will order Pauṇḍraka to do this.

The real meaning of the present verse is as follows. You eternally hold the symbols like the cakra, which I have imitated out of foolishness. Throw your cakra at me and make me surrender to you since you will liberate me. If you do not release your weapon quickly then give me a fight. In verse 8 the Lord says exactly these words to the messenger and to Pauṇḍraka. Since the messenger spoke with hatred and mockery, seeing the Lord just

as the wrestlers saw him in Kaṁsa's arena, concerning shelter, in verse 9 the Lord answers, "You will become the shelter of dogs." Later he answers in verse 20, "I will certainly take shelter of you if I do not wish to fight you."

Text 66.7

śrī-śuka uvāca
katthanaṁ tad upākarṇya pauṇḍrakasyālpa-medhasaḥ
ugrasenādayaḥ sabhyā uccakair jahasus tadā

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: King Ugrasena and the other members of the assembly laughed loudly when they heard this vain boasting of unintelligent Pauṇḍraka.

COMMENTARY: Hearing the boastful words of Pauṇḍraka, who had little intelligence, Ugrasena and others laughed loudly in the presence (upa) of the Lord.

Text 66.8

uvāca dūtaṁ bhagavān parihāsa-kathām anu
utsrakṣye mūḍha cihnāni yais tvam evaṁ vikatthase

The Lord, after enjoying the jokes of the assembly, told the messenger [to relay a message to his master:] "You fool, I will indeed let loose the weapons you boast of in this way.

COMMENTARY: After the assembly had laughed loudly (parihāsa-kathām anu) at the false talks, the Lord spoke to the messenger. You said, "Give up your weapons." Yes, I will release those weapons about which you boast. Or, I will release on you my weapons which you praise as my symbols (yaiḥ).

Text 66.9

mukhaṁ tad apidhāyājña kaṅka-gṛdhra-vaṭair vṛtaḥ
śayiṣyase hatas tatra bhavitā śaraṇaṁ śunām

"When you lie dead, O fool, your face covered by vultures, herons and vaṭa birds, you will become the shelter of dogs."

COMMENTARY: You said that you would surrender to me. That fate will be accomplished with surrender to dogs and not others. After speaking like

this, after turning your face downwards when you fall, cover it with sand and lie down dead. Other people, when sleeping, cover their faces with cloth. The vultures and herons will be your assistants at that time. The vaṭa is a bird with a sharp beak that loves to eat meat. Another meaning by joining this verse with the previous verse is "I will throw my weapons at you and they will make you lie down dead. Those weapons about which you boasted will cover your face."

Text 66.10

iti dūtas tam ākṣepaṁ svāmine sarvam āharat
kṛṣṇo 'pi ratham āsthāya kāśīm upajagāma ha

When the Lord had thus spoken, the messenger conveyed his insulting reply to his master in its entirety. Kṛṣṇa then mounted his chariot and went to the vicinity of Kāśī.

COMMENTARY: Instead of tam ākṣepam sometimes tad ākṣepam is seen. Kṛṣṇa went near (upa) Kāśī. Ha indicates joy. Or he went to Karūṣa which was near Kāṣī.

Text 66.11

pauṇḍrako 'pi tad-udyogam upalabhya mahā-rathaḥ
akṣauhiṇībhyāṁ saṁyukto niścakrāma purād drutam

Upon observing Kṛṣṇa's preparations for battle, the mighty warrior Pauṇḍraka quickly went out of the city with two full military divisions.

COMMENTARY: Pauṇḍraka was a might warrior (mahā-rathaḥ) or he is said to have mounted a great chariot (mahā-rathaḥ) because he got on a chariot with the flag of Garuḍa.

Text 66.12–14

tasya kāśī-patir mitraṁ pārṣṇi-grāho 'nvayān nṛpa
akṣauhiṇībhis tisṛbhir apaśyat pauṇḍrakaṁ hariḥ
śaṅkhāry-asi-gadā-śārṅga-śrīvatsādy-upalakṣitam
bibhrāṇaṁ kaustubha-maṇiṁ vana-mālā-vibhūṣitam
kauśeya-vāsasī pīte vasānaṁ garuḍa-dhvajam
amūlya-mauly-ābharaṇaṁ sphuran-makara-kuṇḍalam

Pauṇḍraka's friend, the king of Kāśī, followed behind, O King, leading the rear guard with three akṣauhiṇī divisions. Kṛṣṇa saw that Pauṇḍraka was carrying the Lord's own insignia, such as the conch, disc, sword and club, and also an imitation Śārṅga bow and Śrīvatsa mark. He wore a mock Kaustubha gem, was decorated with a garland of forest flowers and was dressed in upper and lower garments of fine yellow silk. His banner bore the image of Garuḍa, and he wore a valuable crown and gleaming, shark-shaped earrings.

COMMENTARY: Nṛpaḥ indicates that he had great wealth. Sometimes nṛpa (O King) is seen. Pauṇḍraka had a false Śrīvatsa made by borrowing someone else's body hair. His clothing and ornaments were fake. This will be explained later. Viṣṇu Purāṇa says vakṣasy alaṅkṛtaṁ cāsya śrīvatsaṁ dadṛṣe hariḥ: the Lord saw him with ornaments and Śrīvatsa on his chest. The word ādi indicates the lotus and other symbols. As a blessing from Śiva, he could display four arms. This is explained in Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa. They were also false, since they could be removed from below his armpits with a sword. His crown and ornaments were imitations that looked like the Lord's fine ornaments.

Text 66.15

dṛṣṭvā tam ātmanas tulyaṁ veṣaṁ kṛtrimam āsthitam
yathā naṭaṁ raṅga-gataṁ vijahāsa bhṛśaṁ harīḥ

Kṛṣṇa laughed heartily when he saw how the king had dressed in exact imitation of his own appearance, just like an actor on a stage.

COMMENTARY: Instead of ātmanas tulyam sometimes ātmanā tulyam is seen. His ornaments were imitation (kṛtrimam) whereas the Lord's were naturally manifested.

Text 66.16

śulair gadābhiḥ parighaiḥ śakty-ṛṣṭi-prāsa-tomaraiḥ
asibhiḥ paṭṭiśair bāṇaiḥ prāharann arayo harim

The enemies of Kṛṣṇa attacked him with tridents, clubs, bludgeons, pikes, ṛṣṭis, barbed darts, lances, swords, axes and arrows.

COMMENTARY: These enemies (arayaḥ) were cruel in attacking.

Text 66.17

kṛṣṇas tu tat pauṇḍraka-kāśirājayor
balaṁ gaja-syandana-vāji-patti-mat
gadāsi-cakreṣubhir ārdayad bhṛśaṁ
yathā yugānte huta-bhuk pṛthak prajāḥ

But Kṛṣṇa fiercely struck back at the army of Pauṇḍraka and Kāśirāja, which consisted of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry. The Lord tormented his enemies with his club, sword, cakra and arrows, just as the fire of annihilation torments the various kinds of creatures at the end of a cosmic age.

COMMENTARY: The word tu indicates that though the enemies attacked they could do nothing. Kṛṣṇa on the other hand completely destroyed their armies.

Text 66.18

āyodhanaṁ tad ratha-vāji-kuñjara-
dvipat-kharoṣṭrair ariṇāvakhaṇḍitaiḥ
babhau citaṁ moda-vahaṁ manasvinām
ākrīḍanaṁ bhūta-pater ivolbaṇam

The battlefield, strewn with the dismembered chariots, horses, elephants, humans, mules and camels that had been cut to pieces by the Lord's cakra, shone like the gruesome playground of Śiva, giving pleasure to the wise.

COMMENTARY: This was done especially by his cakra, the best of all weapons. The chariots, as previously, went in front, but the cakra completely destroyed them because of its actions since it was the best weapon.

The battlefield was a fearful sight (ulbaṇam) for the enemy.

Text 66.19

athāha pauṇḍrakaṁ śaurir bho bho pauṇḍraka yad bhavān
dūta-vākyena mām āha tāny astraṇy utsṛjāmi te

Kṛṣṇa then addressed Pauṇḍraka with laughter: My dear Pauṇḍraka, the very weapons you spoke of through your messenger, I now release unto you.

COMMENTARY: After the armies were destroyed, when all obstacles were completely removed, Kṛṣṇa who had appeared in a warrior dynasty (śauriḥ), Svayam Bhagavān, laughed (bho bho). I now release on you those weapons which were mentioned by your messenger.

Text 66.20

tyājayiṣye 'bhidhānaṁ me yat tvayājña mṛṣā dhṛtam
vrajāmi śaranaṁ te 'dya yadi necchāmi saṁyugam

O fool, now I shall make you renounce my name, which you have falsely assumed. And I will certainly take shelter of you if I do not wish to fight you.

COMMENTARY: You told me to give up my false name. I will make you renounce your false name. Tyājayiṣye (give up) can have a causative meaning (make you give up). Thus Kṛṣṇa says that he is giving another meaning to Pauṇḍraka's words. "You should act according to the messenger's words." Yes, on seeing you today, I will surrender according to your words, if I do not fight. Instead of adya (today) sometimes ajña (fool) is seen. By this Kṛṣṇa mocks him.

Text 66.21

iti kṣiptvā śitair bāṇair virathī-kṛtya pauṇḍrakam
śiro 'vṛścad rathāṅgena vajreṇendro yathā gireḥ

Having thus derided Pauṇḍraka, Kṛṣṇa destroyed his chariot with his sharp arrows. The Lord then cut off his head with the Sudarśana disc, just as Indra lops off a mountain peak with his thunderbolt weapon.

COMMENTARY: After deriding (kṣiptvā) Pauṇḍraka, Kṛṣṇa destroyed his chariot.

Text 66.22

tathā kāśī-pateḥ kayak chira utkṛtya patribhiḥ
nyapātayat kāśī-puryāṁ padma-kośam ivānilaḥ

With his arrows, Kṛṣṇa similarly severed Kāśirāja's head from his body, sending it flying into Kāśī city like a lotus flower thrown by the wind.

COMMENTARY: His head entering Kāśī is compared to the wind blowing a lotus, since the cause of his head appearing there was unseen. Or, though he cut his head off with his arrows, it happened so quickly that the cause could not be seen.

Text 66.23

evaṁ matsariṇam hatvā pauṇḍrakaṁ sa-sakhaṁ hariḥ
dvārakām āviśat siddhair gīyamāna-kathāmṛtaḥ

Having thus killed envious Pauṇḍraka and his ally, Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvārakā. As he entered the city, the jīvan-muktas glorified his feat.

COMMENTARY: Pauṇḍraka could not tolerate the excellence of Kṛṣṇa. He is thus called envious (matsariṇam). Kṛṣṇa, whose action of killing Pauṇḍraka (kathāmṛtaḥ) was glorified by jīvan-muktas and persons in airplanes (siddhaiḥ) who had gathered to see the great spectacle, then entered Dvārakā.

Text 66.24

sa nityaṁ bhagavad-dhyāna-pradhvastākhila-bandhanaḥ
bibhrāṇaś ca hare rājan svarūpaṁ tan-mayo 'bhavat

By constantly meditating upon the Supreme Lord, Pauṇḍraka shattered all his material bonds. Indeed, by imitating Kṛṣṇa's appearance, O King, he ultimately became absorbed in him.

COMMENTARY: After describing his envy, Śukadeva describes his liberation. Imitating the Lord's form with four arms, Pauṇḍraka developed a similar form (tan-mayaḥ) because his material bondage was destroyed by his continual meditation on the Lord. He was like an insect trapped by another insect. By constantly thinking of another insect in hatred, the insect develops a similar body.

Text 66.25

śiraḥ patitam ālokya rāja-dvāre sa-kuṇḍalam
kim idaṁ kasya vā vaktram iti saṁśiśire janāḥ

Seeing a head decorated with earrings lying at the gate of the royal palace, the people present were puzzled. Some of them asked, "What is this?" and others said, "It is a head, but whose is it?"

COMMENTARY: "Is this his head or someone else's?" The ordinary people speculated in many ways.

Text 66.26

rājñaḥ kāśī-pater jñātvā mahiṣyaḥ putra-bāndhavāḥ
paurāś ca hā hatā rājan nātha nātheti prārudan

My dear King, when they recognized it as the head of their king—the lord of Kāśi—his queens, sons and other relatives, along with all the citizens of the city, began to cry pitifully: "Alas, we are killed! O my lord, my lord!"

COMMENTARY: They cried, "We have also been killed!"

Text 66.27–28

sudakṣiṇas tasya sutaḥ kṛtvā saṁsthā-vidhiṁ pateḥ
nihatya pitṛ-hantāraṁ yāsyāmy apacitiṁ pituḥ
ity ātmanābhisandhāya sopādhyāyo maheśvaram
su-dakṣiṇo 'rcayām āsa parameṇa samādhinā

After the king's son Sudakṣiṇa had performed the obligatory funeral rituals for his father, he resolved within his mind: "Only by killing my father's murderer can I avenge his death." Thus the charitable Sudakṣiṇa, together with his priests, began worshiping Śiva with great concentration.

COMMENTARY: His son was similarly unintelligent. Along with his priests he began worshipping Śiva with great concentration.

Text 66.29

prīto 'vimukte bhagavāṁs tasmai varam adād vibhuḥ
pitṛ-hantṛ-vadhopāyaṁ sa vavre varam īpsitam

Satisfied by the worship, the powerful Śiva appeared in the sacred precinct of Avimukta and offered Sudakṣiṇa his choice of benedictions. The prince chose as his benediction a means to slay his father's killer.

COMMENTARY: Śiva, also called Avimukta, was the presiding deity at the tīrtha. Thus the place was called Avimukta. Viṣṇu Purāṇa says avimukute mahākṣetre toṣitas tena śaṅkaraḥ: at Avimukta, Śiva became pleased with him. Because he was omniscient (bhagavān), he gave a tricky benediction. The son chose the boon of a method of killing him, not the boon of killing him. He had lost his intelligence at that time.

Text 66.30–31

dakṣiṇāgniṁ paricara brāhmaṇaiḥ samam ṛtvijam
abhicāra-vidhānena sa cāgniḥ pramathair vṛtaḥ
sādhayiṣyati saṅkalpam abrahmaṇye prayojitaḥ
ity ādiṣṭas tathā cakre kṛṣṇāyābhicaran vratī

Śiva told him, "Accompanied by brāhmaṇas, serve the Dakṣiṇāgni fire—the original priest—following the injunctions of the abhicāra ritual. Then the Dakṣiṇāgni fire, together with many Pramathas, will fulfill your desire if you direct it against someone inimical to the brāhmaṇas." So instructed, Sudakṣiṇa strictly observed the ritualistic vows and invoked the abhicāra against Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: Though Śiva speaks of a sacrifice with brāhmaṇas, Śiva should not be despised for saying this. They are not brāhmaṇas. The fire will act against someone who is inimical to brāhmaṇas, and will not at all harm a person who serves brāhmaṇas. However, it was directed towards Kṛṣṇa, who serves brāhmaṇas. He is called brahmaṇya-deva. Thus, it would act against or destroy those who sent the fire, who were disrespectful to brāhmaṇas (abrahmaṇye prayojitaḥ). This was Śiva's intention. Sudakṣiṇa thought that Kṛṣṇa was not devoted to brāhmaṇas (abrahmaṇye), since he had heard that even brāhmaṇas offered respects to Kṛṣṇa.

However the following should be understood. The Lord, worthy of all worship, sometimes produces pastimes which cause others to worship him. The intention of the Lord was to have both parties develop prema for himself (sādhayisyati saṅkalpam). Kuntī said:

tathā paramahaṁsānāṁ munīnām amalātmanām
bhakti-yoga-vidhānārthaṁ kathaṁ paśyema hi striyaḥ

You descend to propagate bhakti-yoga unto the hearts of the advanced transcendentalists and mental speculators, who are purified by being able to discriminate between matter and spirit. How, then, can we women know you perfectly? SB 1.8.20

Kṛṣṇa comes to give bhakti-yoga. This prema is the main motive of the Lord, with hundreds of scriptural statements to prove it such as sālokya-sārṣṭi….(SB 3.29.13). He gives benefit to brāhmaṇas and others (brāhmaṇa-hitāya) by having them worship him while overcoming the fault of excessive awe and veneration for him. Since the great devotees like Nārada never deviate, it is said that such a nature develops just by a sphūrti of the Lord, what to speak of by developing prema. Worship of the Lord by the individual produces bhakti in the form of prema, but filled with the realization of the Lord's powers. By worship inspired by the Lord himself however, the Lord gives the person pure prema with absorption in his qualities like gentleness, even though he is also great. He even sometimes hides his manifestation of powers. That pure prema is considered the best.

nemaṁ viriñco labhate prasādaṁ
na śrīr na śarvaḥ kim utāpare 'nye
yan no 'surāṇām asi durga-pālo
viśvābhivandyair abhivanditāṅghriḥ

We have attained mercy that Brahmā, Lakṣmī or Śiva, what to speak of others, have not attained. You, whose lotus feet are worshiped by the most respected person in the universe, are the protector of us demons in all respects. SB 8.23.6

itthaṁ satāṁ brahma-sukhānubhūtyā
dāsyaṁ gatānāṁ para-daivatena
māyāśritānāṁ nara-dārakeṇa
sākaṁ vijahruḥ kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ

In this way with an abundance of splendor caused by Kṛṣṇa, they played with him, though he is pure consciousness or happiness known as Brahman for the jñānīs, the Supreme Lord for the devotees with dāsya-bhāva and an ordinary human child for those covered by material illusion.

SB 10.12.11

nāyaṁ śriyo ’ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ
svar-yoṣitāṁ nalina-gandha-rucāṁ kuto ’nyāḥ
rāsotsave ’sya bhuja-daṇḍa-gṛhīta-kaṇṭha-
labdhāśiṣāṁ ya udagād vraja-vallabhīnām

When Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the gopīs in the rāsa-līlā, the gopīs were embraced by the arms of the Lord. This favor was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune, though she was intensely attracted to him, or to other consorts in the spiritual world whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. And what to speak of worldly women? SB 10.47.60

Thus the Lord makes his appearance to give benefit to brāhmaṇas and others by giving such pure prema to them, by inspiring them to worship and by being worthy of such worship. This is not a deviation from his respecting brāhmaṇas. His quality of being the best respecter of brāhmaṇas (brāhmaṇya-deva) is accomplished by this (saṅkalpam sādhayiṣyati), since others cannot give them any benefit. Instead of samam sometimes samyak (completely) is seen. The other meaning is “By directing the fire against those who do not respect brāhmaṇas, your desires will be fulfilled.” They then engaged in actions to harm Kṛṣṇa (abhicaran).

Text 66.32–33

tato ’gnir utthitaḥ kuṇḍān mūrtimān ati-bhīṣaṇaḥ
tapta-tāmra-śikhā-śmaśrur aṅgārodgāri-locanaḥ
daṁṣṭrogra-bhru-kuṭī-daṇḍa-kaṭhorāsyaḥ sva-jihvayā
ālihan sṛkvaṇī nagno vidhunvaṁs tri-śikhaṁ jvalat

Thereupon the fire rose up out of the altar pit, assuming the form of an extremely fearsome, naked person. The fiery creature’s beard and the tuft of hair were like molten copper, and his eyes emitted blazing hot cinders. His face looked most frightful with its fangs and terrible arched and furrowed brows. As he licked the corners of his mouth with his tongue, the demon shook his flaming trident.

COMMENTARY: After doing this worship for a long time, finally the fire appeared. The frightful nature of the fire is described. With his wide tongue, he licked completely (ā-lihan) the two corners of his mouth.

Text 66.34

padbhyāṁ tāla-pramāṇābhyāṁ kampayann avanī-talam
so ʼbhyadhāvad vṛto bhūtair dvārakāṁ pradahan diśaḥ

On legs as tall as palm trees, the monster raced toward Dvārakā in the company of ghostly spirits, shaking the ground and burning the world in all directions.

COMMENTARY: He was accompanied by Pramathas (bhūtaiḥ).

Text 66.35

tam ābhicāra-dahanam āyāntaṁ dvārakaukasaḥ
vilokya tatrasuḥ sarve vana-dāhe mṛgā yathā

Seeing the approach of the fiery demon created by the abhicāra ritual, the residents of Dvārakā were all struck with fear, like animals terrified by a forest fire.

COMMENTARY: The people had great terror because they had no place to flee, like animals in a forest fire.

Text 66.36

akṣaiḥ sabhāyāṁ krīḍantaṁ bhagavantaṁ bhayāturāḥ
trāhi trāhi tri-lokeśa vahneḥ pradahataḥ puram

Distraught with fear, the people cried out to the Lord, who was then playing at dice in the royal court: "Save us! Save us, O Lord of the three worlds, from this fire burning up the city!"

COMMENTARY: They narrate what was previously described. Save us from the fire completely burning the city. They repeat the word trāhi because of extreme fear. This is easy for you since you protect the three worlds (tri-lokeśa).

Text 66.37

śrutvā taj jana-vaiklavyaṁ dṛṣṭvā svānāṁ ca sādhvasam
śaraṇyaḥ samprahasyāha mā bhaiṣṭety avitāsmy aham

When Kṛṣṇa heard the people's agitation and saw that even his own men were disturbed, that most worthy giver of shelter simply laughed and

told them, "Do not fear; I shall protect you."

COMMENTARY: Hearing the citizens' words of fear and pain, and seeing the Yādavas worried about a disaster, he laughed loudly (sam), with disregard (pra), with hidden intentions. He indicated that the incident was trivial in order to alleviate their fears, since he was the protector of his devotees (śaraṇyaḥ). He spoke to indicate his powers, to pacify them.

Text 66.38

sarvasyāntar-bahiḥ-sākṣī kṛtyāṁ māheśvarīṁ vibhuḥ
vijñāya tad-vighātārthaṁ pārśva-sthaṁ cakram ādiśat

The almighty Lord, the internal and external witness of all, understood that the monster had been produced by Śiva from the sacrificial fire. To defeat the demon, Kṛṣṇa dispatched his cakra, which was waiting at his side.

COMMENTARY: He understood particularly (vi-jñāya) the intentions of his devotee Śiva. He dispatched the cakra which was always at his side, waiting to carry out his order.

Text 66.39

tat sūrya-koṭi-pratimaṁ sudarśanaṁ
jājvalyamānaṁ pralayānala-prabham
sva-tejasā khaṁ kakubho 'tha rodasī
cakraṁ mukundāstraṁ athāgnim ārdayat

That Sudarśana, the cakra of Mukunda, blazed forth like millions of suns. His effulgence blazed like the fire of universal annihilation, and with his heat he pained the sky, all the directions, heaven and earth, and also the fiery demon.

COMMENTARY: After getting the order, the cakra afflicted the fire demon. Though the cakra was sharp and hot, it was seen as pleasant to look at by the devotees (sudarśanam). Still the Lord was willing to give such persons liberation (mukundasya).

Text 66.40

kṛtyānalaḥ pratihataḥ sa rathāṅga-pāṇer
astraujasā sa nṛpa bhagna-mukho nivṛttaḥ
vārāṇasīṁ parisametya sudakṣiṇaṁ taṁ
sartvig-janaṁ samadahat sva-kṛto 'bhicāraḥ.

Frustrated by the power of Kṛṣṇa's weapon, O King, the fiery creature produced by black magic turned his face away and retreated. Created for violence, the demon then returned to Vārāṇasī, where he surrounded the city and then burned Sudakṣiṇa and his priests to death, even though Sudakṣiṇa was his creator.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa was the holder of the cakra (rathāṅga-pāṇeḥ). This shows that it was always in his hand. The cakra is thus glorified. The fire turned around and went back to Vārānasī and burned up completely (sam-adahat) Sudakṣiṇa along with the Pramathas, till they were only ashes. The fire was Sudakṣiṇa's creation (sva-kṛtaḥ). This phrase produces astonishment and bliss.

Text 66.41

cakraṁ ca viṣṇos tad-anupraviṣṭaṁ
vārānasīṁ sāṭṭa-sabhālayāpaṇām
sa-gopurāṭṭālaka-koṣṭha-saṅkulāṁ
sa-kośa-hasty-aśva-rathānna-śālinīm

The Lord's cakra also entered Vārāṇasī, in pursuit of the fiery demon, and proceeded to burn the city to the ground, including all its assembly halls and residential palaces with raised porches, its numerous marketplaces, gateways, watchtowers, warehouses and treasuries, and all the buildings housing elephants, horses, chariots and grains.

COMMENTARY: The cakra burned down the city. The verb is understood from the previous verse. Instead of śālinīm sometimes śālām is seen.

Text 66.42

dagdhvā vārāṇasīṁ sarvāṁ viṣṇoś cakraṁ sudarśanam
bhūyaḥ pārśvam upātiṣṭhat kṛṣṇasyākliṣṭa-karmaṇaḥ

After burning down the entire city of Vārāṇasī, the Lord's cakra returned to the side of Kṛṣṇa, whose actions are effortless.

COMMENTARY: The cakra was always beautiful to behold (su-darśanam). This pastime is not astonishing since the Lord's actions take place without effort (akliṣṭa-karmaṇaḥ).

Text 66.43

ya enaṁ śrāvayen martya uttamaḥ-śloka-vikramam
samāhito vā śṛṇuyāt sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate

Any mortal who recounts this heroic pastime of the praiseworthy Lord, or who simply hears it attentively, will become free from all sins.

COMMENTARY: One who recounts this exploit of the Lord in which he punished the people of Kāśī who were opposed to the Lord or hears it with attention and faith (samāhitaḥ) will be freed from all sins. Not only the reciter, who speaks for his own and other's benefit, but also (vā) the listener, who hears for his own benefit, is freed of all sins.

Chapter Sixty-seven
Lord Balarāma Slays Dvivida Gorilla

Text 67.1

śrī-rājovāca
bhuyo 'haṁ śrotum icchāmi rāmasyādbhuta-karmaṇaḥ
anantasyāprameyasya yad anyat kṛtavān prabhuḥ

King Parīkṣit said: I wish to hear further about Balarāma, the unlimited and immeasurable Supreme Lord, whose activities are all astounding. What else did he do?

COMMENTARY: Previously Parīkṣit had heard about Balarāma pulling the Yamunā with his plough. In the midst of discussing Balarāma's pastimes the killing of Pauṇḍraka was related, since this happened when Balarāma was in Vraja. Fearing interruption, Parīkṣit praises Balarāma and inquires from Śukadeva. Tell me Balarāma's other activities since he is full of all powers (vibhuḥ or prabhuḥ).

Text 67.2

śrī-śuka uvāca
narakasya sakhā kaścid dvivido nāma vānaraḥ
sugrīva-sacivaḥ so 'tha bhrātā maindasya vīryavān

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: There was an ape named Dvivida who was a friend of Narakāsura's. This powerful Dvivida, the brother of Mainda, had been instructed by King Sugrīva.

COMMENTARY: Though he associated with Sugrīva, the cause of his present foolishness was his friendship with Naraka. As a result, he became extremely evil-minded. The cause of this bad association was pride in his strength by which he did not respect Lakṣmaṇa. Mainda and Dvivida are two forms worshipped as āvaraṇa deities when worshipping Rāma. They are situated in Vaikuṇṭha. The Mainda and Dvivida mentioned in this verse are different persons endowed with a portion of their śakti. Because they did not respect Lakṣmaṇa, they appeared, like Jaya and Vijaya, as demons

in order to show the result of committing offenses. Or the word atha indicates that next to Dvivida was his brother, who was very similar.

Text 67.3

sakhyuḥ so 'pacitiṁ kurvan vānaro rāṣṭra-viplavam
pura-grāmākarān ghoṣān adahad vahnim utsṛjan

To avenge the death of his friend [Naraka], the ape Dvivida ravaged the land, setting fires that burned cities, villages, mines and cowherd dwellings.

COMMENTARY: Paying debt to his friend out of respect, he set fire to the cities, caused damage to the lands around Dvārakā such as Saurāṣṭra. Or rāṣṭra-viplavam can modify apacitim: he paid his debt to his friend in the form of causing havoc in the country. The word vānaraḥ (monkey) is repeated in this verse from the last verse to emphasize his fickle and evil nature. The order is from greater to lesser: cities, villages, mines and cowherd villages. If he destroyed the larger cities, he definitely destroyed the rest.

Text 67.4

kvacit sa śailān utpāṭya tair deśān samacūrṇayat
ānartān sutarām eva yatrāste mitra-hā hariḥ

Once, Dvivida tore up a number of mountains and used them to devastate all the neighboring kingdoms, especially the province of Ānarta, wherein dwelt his friend's killer, Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: Throwing the mountains around, he crushed the provinces.

Text 67.5

kvacit samudra-madhya-stho dorbhyām utkṣipya taj-jalam
deśān nāgāyuta-prāṇo velā-kūle nyamajjayat

Another time he entered the ocean and, with the strength of ten thousand elephants, churned up its water with his arms and thus submerged the coastal regions.

COMMENTARY: Having the strength (prāṇaḥ) of ten thousand elephants, he submerged whatever was present on the shore. Instead of velā-kūle

sometimes kūlān is seen. Use of the word prāṇaḥ to denote “possessing strength” follows the rule arśa ādibhyo ’c (Pāṇini 5.2.127)

Text 67.6

āśramān ṛṣi-mukhyānāṁ kṛtvā bhagna-vanaspatīn
adūṣayac chakṛn-mūtrair agnīn vaitānikān khalaḥ

The wicked ape tore down the trees in the hermitages of exalted sages and contaminated their sacrificial fires with his feces and urine.

COMMENTARY: The chief sages were devotees of the Lord.

Text 67.7

puruṣān yoṣito dṛptaḥ kṣmābhṛd-dronī-guhāsu saḥ
nikṣipya cāpyadhāc chailaiḥ peśaṣkārīva kīṭakam

Just as a wasp imprisons smaller insects, he arrogantly threw both men and women into caves in a mountain valley and sealed the caves shut with boulders.

COMMENTARY: Proud of his strength he imprisoned men and women. Kīṭakam is in the singular to express a class of insects.

Text 67.8

evaṁ deśān viprakurvan dūṣayaṁś ca kula-striyaḥ
śrutvā su-lalitaṁ gītaṁ giriṁ raivatakaṁ yayau

Once, while Dvivida was thus engaged in harassing the neighboring kingdoms and polluting women of respectable families, hearing very sweet singing coming from Raivataka Mountain, he went there.

COMMENTARY: He ravaged the places, doing more and more atrocious acts. Viṣṇu purāṇa says:

kāma-rūpī mahā-rūpam kṛtvā sasyāny aśeṣataḥ
luṭhan bhramaṇa-sammardaiḥ sañcūrṇayati vānarah

Dvivida, taking a huge form at will, looted and destroyed all the crops by going around and smashing them.

Text 67.9–10

tatrāpaśyad yadu-patiṁ rāmaṁ puṣkara-mālinam
sudarśanīya-sarvāṅgaṁ lalanā-yūtha-madhya-gam
gāyantaṁ vāruṇīṁ pītvā mada-vihvala-locanam
vibhrājamānaṁ vapuṣā prabhinnam iva vāraṇam

There he saw Balarāma, the Lord of the Yadus, adorned with a garland of lotuses and appearing most attractive in every limb. He was singing amidst a crowd of young women, and since he had drunk vāruṇī liquor, his eyes rolled as if he were intoxicated. His body shone brilliantly as he behaved like an elephant in rut.

COMMENTARY: As Lord of the Yadus, Balarāma was endowed with all powers and was full of bliss. He was by nature the relisher of enjoyment (rāmam). He was adorned skillfully with clothing of the forest, including a garland and by nature possessed the highest beauty (sudarśanīya-sarvāṅgam). He was glorious amongst his consorts. He sang, displaying his cleverness and playfulness. He showed intoxicated eyes as a pastime. He continually drank liquor. He shone brightly. A comparison with elephants is given for materialistic listeners so that gradually they can realize his special sweetness.

Text 67.11

duṣṭaḥ śākhā-mṛgaḥ śākhām ārūḍhaḥ kampayan drumān
cakre kilakilā-śabdam ātmānaṁ sampradarśayan

The mischievous ape climbed a tree branch and then revealed his presence by shaking the trees and making an indistinct sound.

COMMENTARY: Though he climbed one branch he made many trees shake because of the dense growth. He made an indistinct sound (kilakila). He showed off his huge size (pra) and his boldness (sam).

Text 67.12

tasya dhārṣṭyaṁ kaper vīkṣya taruṇyo jāti-cāpalāḥ
hāsya-priyā vijahasur baladeva-parigrahāḥ

When Baladeva's consorts saw the ape's impudence, they began to laugh. They were, after all, young girls who were fond of joking and prone to silliness.

COMMENTARY: They laughed loudly, conspicuously (vi-jahasuḥ), because they were fond of laughing, since by nature and youthfulness they were fickle. They did not laugh with bad intentions. Nor did they laugh out of fear since they were Balarāma's consorts.

Text 67.13

tā helayām āsa kapir bhrū-kṣepair sammukhādibhiḥ
darśayan sva-gudaṁ tāsāṁ rāmasya ca nirīkṣitaḥ

Even as Balarāma looked on, Dvivida insulted the girls by making odd gestures with his eyebrows, coming right in front of them, and showing them his anus.

COMMENTARY: He insulted them with various expressions on his face and by moving his eyebrows.

Text 67.14–15

taṁ grāvṇā prāharat kruddho balaḥ praharatāṁ varaḥ
sa vañcayitvā grāvāṇaṁ madirā-kalaśaṁ kapiḥ
gṛhītvā helayām āsa dhūrtas taṁ kopayan hasan
nirbhidya kalaśaṁ duṣṭo vāsāṁsy āsphālayad balam
kadarthī-kṛtya balavān vipracakre madoddhataḥ

Angered, Balarāma, the best of fighters, hurled a rock at him, but the cunning ape dodged the rock and grabbed the Lord's pot of liquor. Further infuriating Balarāma by laughing and by ridiculing him, wicked Dvivida then broke the pot and offended the Lord even more by pulling at the girls' clothing. Thus the powerful ape, puffed up with false pride, continued to insult Balarāma.

COMMENTARY: He made Balarāma angry by laughing at him. Or he made Balarāma angry, and on seeing his anger, he laughed. He further offended Balarāma, though Balarāma had more strength. He continually harassed the women because he was ill-behaved (uddhata) from pride. He behaved improperly because he was strong (balavān). Another meaning of uddhata as a pun is "extremely defeated."

Text 67.16

taṁ tasyāvinayaṁ dṛṣṭvā deśāṁś ca tad-upadrutān
kruddho muṣalam ādatta halaṁ cāri-jighāṁsayā

Balarāma saw the ape's rude behavior and thought of the disruptions he had created in the surrounding kingdoms. Thus the Lord angrily took up his club and his plow weapon, having decided to put his enemy to death.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma considered his rudeness and his disturbance to the country. This verse again mentioned that he was angry. He was even angrier.

Text 67.17

dvivido 'pi mahā-vīryaḥ śālam udyamya pāṇinā
abhyetya tarasā tena balaṁ mūrdhany atāḍayat

Mighty Dvivida also came forward to do battle. Uprooting a śāla tree with one hand, he rushed toward Balarāma and struck him on the head with the tree trunk.

COMMENTARY: Uprooting a tree with one hand, Dvivida approached Balarāma face to face.

Text 67.18

taṁ tu saṅkarṣaṇo mūrdhni patantam acalo yathā
pratijagrāha balavān sunandenāhanac ca tam

But Saṅkarṣaṇa remained as motionless as a mountain and simply grabbed the log as it fell upon his head. He then struck Dvivida with his club, named Sunanda.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma accepted the log and remained without moving like a mountain. He did not move at all. The tree was insignificant. Balarāma again and again tolerated his offenses since he remembered that previously Dvivida had served Rāma.

Text 67.19–21

mūṣalāhata-mastiṣko vireje rakta-dhārayā
girir yathā gairikayā prahāraṁ nānucintayan
punar anyaṁ samutkṣipya kṛtvā niṣpatram ojasā

tenāhanat su-saṅkruddhas taṁ balaḥ śatadhācchinat
tato ’nyena ruṣā jaghne taṁ cāpi śatadhācchinat

Struck on the skull by the Lord’s club, Dvivida became brilliantly decorated by an outpour of blood, like a mountain beautified by red oxide. Ignoring the wound, Dvivida uprooted another tree, stripped it of leaves by brute force and struck the Lord again. Now enraged, Balarāma shattered the tree into hundreds of pieces, upon which Dvivida grabbed yet another tree and furiously hit the Lord again. This tree, too, the Lord smashed into hundreds of pieces.

COMMENTARY: Ignoring his wound, Dvivida then uprooted another tree. The sentence continues from verse 19 to 20. Dvivida hit Balarāma with another tree, but Balarāma smashed it.

Text 67.22

evaṁ yudhyan bhagavatā bhagne bhagne punaḥ punaḥ
ākṛṣya sarvato vṛkṣān nirvṛkṣam akarod vanam

Thus fighting the Lord, who again and again demolished the trees he was attacked with, Dvivida kept on uprooting trees from all sides until the forest was left treeless.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma countered all his attacks but did not kill him since he had a purpose in his pastime.

Text 67.23

tato ’muñcac chilā-varṣaṁ balasyopary amarṣitaḥ
tat sarvaṁ cūrṇayāṁ āsa līlayā muṣalāyudhaḥ

The angry ape then released a rain of stones upon Balarāma, but the wielder of the club easily pulverized them all.

COMMENTARY: When he ran out of trees, Dvivida threw stones.

Text 67.24

sa bāhū tāla-saṅkāśau muṣṭī-kṛtya kapīśvaraḥ
āsādya rohiṇī-putraṁ tābhyāṁ vakṣasy arūrujat

Dvivida, the most powerful of apes, now clenched his fists at the end of his palm-tree-sized arms, came before the son of Rohiṇī and beat his fists against the Lord's chest.

COMMENTARY: When he ran out of stones he attacked with his fists. Śukadeva, remembering Rohiṇī's love for him, calls Balarāma the son of Rohiṇī.

Text 67.25

yādavendro 'pi taṁ dorbhyāṁ tyaktvā muṣala-lāṅgale
jatrāv abhyardayat kruddhaḥ so 'patad rudhiraṁ vaman

The furious Lord of the Yādavas then threw aside his club and plow and with his bare hands hammered a blow upon Dvivida's collarbone. The ape collapsed, vomiting blood.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma gave up his pestle and plough since Dvivida had no weapons to fight with. This was the proper code. Using his fists, he put Dvivida in complete pain (abhy-ardayat). The form ardayat instead of ārdayat is poetic license. Dvivida (saḥ) then fell down, vomiting blood.

Text 67.26

cakampe tena patatā sa-ṭaṅkaḥ sa-vanaspatiḥ
parvataḥ kuru-śārdūla vāyunā naur ivāmbhasi

When he fell, O tiger among the Kurus, Raivataka Mountain shook, along with its cliffs and trees, like a wind-tossed about at sea.

COMMENTARY: When he fell, the cliffs shook. Taṅka means a hole with water. This indicates there were floods of water. It means the wall of a mountain according to Tri-kāṇḍa-śeṣa. The walls enclosed water.

Text 67.27

jaya-śabdo namaḥ-śabdaḥ sādhu sādhv iti cāmbare
sura-siddha-munīndrāṇām āsīt kusuma-varṣiṇām

In the heavens the devatās, jīvan-muktas and great sages cried out, "Victory to you! Obeisances to you! Excellent! Well done!" and showered flowers upon the Lord.

COMMENTARY: The best of the devatās like Indra shouted “Very good!” Each of them shouted these words because of bliss, devotion and astonishment. Or, according to their bhāva, devatās shouted “Victory!” jīvan-muktas shouted “Obeisances to you!” and sages shouted, “Very good!”

Text 67.28

evaṁ nihatya dvividaṁ jagad-vyatikarāvaham
saṁstūyamāno bhagavān janaiḥ sva-puram āviśat

Having thus killed Dvivida, who had disturbed the whole world, the Supreme Lord returned to his capital as the people along the way chanted his glories.

COMMENTARY: People, including the devatās and sages praised him. Balarāma was endowed with omniscience and mercy (bhagavān). Thus it is understood that he freed the people who had confined in caves by Dvivida. When he entered the city, his people (sva) gathered and celebrated.

Chapter Sixty-eight
The Marriage of Sāmba

Text 68.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
duryodhana-sutāṁ rājan lakṣmaṇāṁ samitiṁ-jayaḥ
svayaṁvara-sthām aharat sāmbo jāmbavatī-sutaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, Jāmbavatī's son Sāmba, ever victorious in battle, kidnapped Duryodhana's daughter Lakṣmaṇā from her svayaṁ-vara ceremony.

COMMENTARY: Hari-vaṁśa says:

hṛto yadaiva pradyumnaḥ śambareṇātma-ghātinā
tam eva māsaṁ sāmbas tu jāmbavatyām ajāyata

When Pradyumna was taken by the abductor Śambara, Sāmba was born to Jāmbavatī.

Since Pradyumna and Sāmba were thus of almost the same age, the incident told now actually happened previously. The story is now mentioned in relation to Balarāma's prowess. According to previous comments, the birth of Pradyumna and the marriage of Kṛṣṇa with Jāmbavatī are narrated in Bhāgavatam in reverse order. Thus the order presented in the text is only the order in which Parīkṣit heard the events. Because Jāmbavatī was dear to Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa was very affectionate to her son Sāmba. She prayed for a son as beautiful as Pradyumna. When Kṛṣṇa performed austerities to glorify his great devotee Śiva, Sāmba was born. He was called Sāmba because he always stayed with his mother out of affection for her according to Dāna-dharma (Mahābhārata). His name is therefore Sāmba (with his mother) not Śāmba.

Text 68.2

kauravāḥ kupitā ūcur durvinīto 'yam arbhakaḥ
kadarthī-kṛtya naḥ kanyām akāmām aharad balāt

The angry Kurus said: This ill-behaved boy has offended us, forcibly kidnapping our unmarried daughter against her will.

COMMENTARY: Duryodhana and others called Sāmba a child since he was disrespectful and proud. Or they insulted him by calling him a boy protected by his father since he has insulted them and also had taken her against her will.

Text 68.3

badhnītemaṁ durvinītaṁ kiṁ kariṣyanti vṛṣṇayaḥ
ye 'smat-prasādopacitāṁ dattāṁ no bhuñjate mahīm

Arrest this ill-behaved Sāmba! What will the Vṛṣṇis do? By our grace they are ruling the land that we have granted them.

COMMENTARY: They forbad killing him. They only wanted to arrest him since it was the opinion of Bhīṣma and Vidura that he was now the groom, since it was not possible for her to choose another groom, since he had touched her. Thus it is explained later that they were determined to capture him.

The reason was his bad behavior (durvinītam). Otherwise others would see them as defeated.

Text 68.4

nigṛhītaṁ sutaṁ śrutvā yady eṣyantīha vṛṣṇayaḥ
bhagna-darpāḥ śamaṁ yānti prāṇā iva su-saṁyatāḥ

If the Vṛṣṇis come here when they learn that their son has been captured, we will break their pride. Thus they'll become subdued, like bodily senses brought under strict control.

COMMENTARY: They will be under our control (śamaṁ yānti). An example of controlling what is difficult to control is given: even senses can be brought under control.

Text 68.5

iti karṇaḥ śalo bhūrir yajñaketuḥ suyodhanaḥ
sāmbam ārebhire yoddhuṁ kuru-vṛddhānumoditāḥ

After saying this and having their plan sanctioned by the senior member of the Kuru dynasty, Karṇa, Śala, Bhūri, Yajñaketu and Duryodhana set out to attack Sāmba.

COMMENTARY: Śala, Bhūri and Yajñaketu (Bhuriśravā) were sons of Somadatta. The elders approved in order to give them enthusiasm but actually they approved of the act in order to reveal the false pride of their juniors.

Text 68.6

dṛṣṭvānudhāvataḥ sāmbo dhārtarāṣṭrān mahā-rathaḥ
pragṛhya ruciraṁ cāpaṁ tasthau siṁha ivaikalaḥ

Seeing Duryodhana and his companions rushing toward him, Sāmba, the great chariot-fighter, took up his splendid bow and stood alone like a lion.

COMMENTARY: Sāmba took up his bow diligently (pra-gṛhya), stringing it.

Text 68.7

taṁ te jighṛkṣavaḥ kruddhās tiṣṭha tiṣṭheti bhāṣiṇaḥ
āsādya dhanvino bāṇaiḥ karṇāgraṇyaḥ samākiran

Determined to capture him, the angry bowmen led by Karṇa shouted at Sāmba, "Stand and fight! Stand and fight!" They came straight for him and showered him with arrows.

COMMENTARY: They covered him completely with arrows (samākiran).

Text 68.8

so 'paviddhaḥ kuru-śreṣṭha kurubhir yadu-nandanaḥ
nāmṛṣyat tad acintyārbhaḥ siṁha kṣudra-mṛgair iva

O best of the Kurus, as Kṛṣṇa's astonishing son Sāmba was being unjustly harassed by the Kurus, that darling of the Yadu dynasty did not tolerate their attack, any more than a lion would tolerate an attack by puny animals.

COMMENTARY: Attacked violently (atividdhaḥ) or attacked out of infamy (apa-viddhaḥ) Sāmba did not tolerate it. O best of the Kurus! Śukadeva

pacified Parīkṣit who was ashamed of the Kurus' bad behavior. Sāmba was the joy of the Yadus (yadu-nandanaḥ). Hari-vaṁśa says:

bālyāt prabhṛti rāmeṇa so 'streṣu viniyojitaḥ
rāmād anantaraṁ caiva mānitaḥ sarva-vṛṣṇabhiḥ

From childhood Sāmba had been trained by Balarāma. He was respected by Balarāma and all the Vṛṣṇis. By his nature he was an astounding boy.

Text 68.9–10

visphūrjya ruciraṁ cāpaṁ sarvān vivyādha sāyakaiḥ
karṇādīn ṣaḍ rathān vīrans tāvadbhir yugapat pṛthak
caturbhiś caturo vāhān ekaikena ca sārathīn
rathinaś ca maheṣvāsāṁs tasya tat te 'bhyapūjayan

Twanging his wonderful bow, heroic Sāmba struck with arrows the six warriors headed by Karṇa. He pierced the six chariots with as many arrows, each team of four horses with four arrows, and each charioteer with a single arrow, and he similarly struck the great bowmen who commanded the chariots. The enemy warriors congratulated Sāmba for this display of prowess.

COMMENTARY: He drew his bow fully in a splendid manner (ruciram). He pierced the six chariots with six arrows. They all praised him simultaneously (abhi-apūjayan).

Text 68.11

taṁ tu te virathaṁ cakruś catvāraś caturo hayān
ekas tu sārathiṁ jaghne cicchedaṇyaḥ śarāsanam

But they forced him down from his chariot, and thereupon four of them struck his four horses, one of them struck down his charioteer, and another broke his bow.

COMMENTARY: Two verses explain their actions (11-12). Karṇa (ekaḥ) struck his chariot and Bhīṣma (anyaḥ) broke his bow.

Text 68.12

taṁ baddhvā virathī-kṛtya kṛcchreṇa kuravo yudhi
kumāraṁ svasya kanyāṁ ca sva-puraṁ jayino 'viśan

Having deprived Sāmba of his chariot during the fight, the Kuru warriors tied him up with great difficulty and then returned victorious to their city, taking the young boy and their princess.

COMMENTARY: After they had got him off the chariot they bound him. Otherwise it was impossible. Taking (verb understood) the boy and the girl they entered the city. By describing him as a young boy (kumāram) it is shown that it was unjust for many elder, proud warriors to bind one boy. It was previously said that Sāmba was an astonishing boy (acintyārbhaḥ). The victory of the Kurus was by the will of the Lord for particular pastimes, just as Aniruddha was captured only by the will of the Lord.

Text 68.13

tac chrutvā nāradoktena rājan sañjāta-manyavaḥ
kurūn praty udyamaṁ cakrur ugrasena-pracoditāḥ

O King, when the Yādavas heard news of this from Nārada, they became angry. Urged on by King Ugrasena, they prepared for war against the Kurus.

COMMENTARY: The Yādavas heard about this from Nārada. They were urged on by Ugrasena, not by Kṛṣṇa since it was not proper to make such efforts for his son in the midst of elders, relatives and friends, and he also knew the intention of Balarāma. He also respected that he had given control of the kingdom to Ugrasena.

Text 68.14–15

sāntvayitvā tu tān rāmaḥ sannaddhān vṛṣṇi-puṅgavān
naicchat kurūṇāṁ vṛṣṇīnāṁ kaliṁ kali-malāpahaḥ
jagāma hāstina-puraṁ rathenāditya-varcasā
brāhmaṇaiḥ kula-vṛddhaiś ca vṛtaś candra iva grahaiḥ

Balarāma, however, cooled the tempers of the Vṛṣṇi heroes, who had already put on their armor. He who purifies the age of quarrel did not want a quarrel between the Kurus and Vṛṣṇis. Thus, accompanied by brāhmaṇas and family elders, he went to Hastināpura on his chariot, which was as effulgent as the sun. As he went, he appeared like the moon surrounded by the ruling planets.

COMMENTARY: The Kurus and the Vṛṣṇis were related through the marriage of Kuntī (a Vṛṣṇi married to a Kuru) and Rohiṇī (a Kuru married to a Vṛṣṇi). Balarāma did not want a quarrel between them since he was the remover of quarrel prominent in Kali-yuga. Or he was the destroyer of Duryodhana's (Kali personified) pride (mala). But he did not want to kill him because of his merciful nature. This showed the difficulty in uprooting the fault of hatred towards the Lord and his devotees, even by the Lord himself.

Text 68.16

gatvā gajāhvayaṁ rāmo bāhyopavanam āsthitaḥ
uddhavaṁ preṣayām āsa dhṛtarāṣṭraṁ bubhutsayā

Upon arriving at Hastināpura, Balarāma remained in a garden outside the city and sent Uddhava ahead to probe King Dhṛtarāṣṭra's intentions.

COMMENTARY: Dhṛtarāṣṭra means "having a kingdom." His desire for the kingdom was the cause of the foolishness of Duryodhana and others.

Text 68.17

so 'bhivandyāmbikā-putraṁ bhīṣmaṁ droṇaṁ ca bāhlikam
duryodhanaṁ ca vidhi-vad rāmam āgataṁ abravīt

After he had offered proper respects to Dhṛtarāṣṭra and to Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Bāhlika and Duryodhana, Uddhava informed them that Balarāma had arrived.

COMMENTARY: The Pāṇḍavas are not mentioned since they were now living in Indraprastha. The word ca after mentioning Duryodhana indicates that actually he should not have respected Duryodhana, but according to custom, he also externally offered him respect. Ultimately Uddhava also saw that Paramātmā was present in all the rulers present there.

Text 68.18

te 'ti-prītās tam ākarṇya prāptaṁ rāmaṁ suhṛt-tamam
tam arcayitvābhiyayuḥ sarve maṅgala-pāṇayaḥ

Overjoyed to hear that Balarāma, their dearest friend, had come, they first honored Uddhava and then went forth to meet the Lord, carrying auspicious offerings in their hands.

COMMENTARY: The Yādavas were their friends, Vasudeva was a better friend, and Balarāma was the best friend (suhṛt-tamam) since he was the son of Rohiṇī, belonging to the Puru dynasty. Or because Balarāma had taught Duryodhana fighting with the club since Duryodhana was obedient to him, they were most affectionate to him. Or, they were most affectionate to him because he had personally come to pacify them so as to free Sāmba.

Text 68.19

taṁ saṅgamya yathā-nyāyaṁ gām arghyaṁ ca nyavedayan
teṣāṁ ye tat-prabhāva-jñāḥ praṇemuḥ śirasā balam

They approached Balarāma and worshiped him with gifts of cows and arghya, as was fitting. Those among the Kurus who understood his true power bowed down to him, touching their heads to the ground.

COMMENTARY: Bhīṣma and others worshipped him.

Text 68.20

bandhūn kuśalinaḥ śrutvā pṛṣṭvā śivam anāmayam
parasparam atho rāmo babhāṣe 'viklavaṁ vacaḥ

After both parties had heard that their relatives were doing well and both had inquired into each other's welfare and health, Balarāma without fear spoke to the Kurus as follows.

COMMENTARY: They mutually asked and then heard about their relatives' welfare and health. After that, without fear (aviklava) Balarāma spoke.

Text 68.21

ugrasenaḥ kṣitīśeśo yad va ājñāpayat prabhuḥ
tad avyagra-dhiyaḥ śrutvā kurudhvam avilambitam

[Balarāma said:] King Ugrasena is our master and the ruler of kings. With undivided attention you should hear what he has ordered you to do, and then you should do it at once.

COMMENTARY: Since Ugrasena is the king, you should obey his order. He is also the giver of orders to great kings (prabhuḥ). He was not called a king because Yayati had forbidden the Yadus to be kings (since Yadu refused to

give Yayati his youth). That you should obey him is also reasonable since you are careful people (avyagra-dhiyaḥ). Or he says this to put them at ease. Be peaceful (avyagra-dhiyaḥ). Do not be fearful, worrying about what will happen.

Text 68.22

yad yūyaṁ bahavas tv ekaṁ jitvādharmeṇa dhārmikam
abadhnītātha tan mṛṣye bandhūnām aikya-kāmyayā

[King Ugrasena has said:] Even though by adharma many of you defeated and tied up a single opponent who follows dharma, still I am tolerating this for the sake of unity among family members.

COMMENTARY: Many persons fighting a single person is adharma.

Text 68.23

vīrya-śaurya-balonnaddham ātma-śakti-samaṁ vacaḥ
kuravo baladevasya niśamyocuḥ prakopitāḥ

Upon hearing Balarāma's words, which were full of potency, courage and strength and were appropriate to his power, the Kauravas became furious and spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY: As soon as they heard his words, they became intensely angry because of those words, since they were inclined to use bad words.

Text 68.24

aho mahac citram idea kāla-gatyā duratyayā
ārurukṣaty upānad vai śiro mukuṭa-sevitam

[The Kuru nobles said:] Oh, how amazing this is! The force of time is indeed insurmountable: a lowly shoe now wants to climb on the head that bears the royal crown.

COMMENTARY: How amazing (aho)! But this is not surprising. Time cannot be overcome. This pride is impossible to avoid.

Text 68.25

ete yaunena sambaddhāḥ saha-śayyāsanāśanāḥ
vṛṣṇayas tulyatāṁ nītā asmad-datta-nṛpāsanāḥ

It is because these Vṛṣṇis are bound to us by marital ties that we have granted them equality, allowing them to share our beds, seats and meals. Indeed, it is we who have given them their royal thrones.

COMMENTARY: The Vṛṣṇis are bound to us by marriage. This is directed at Balarāma. His mother Rohiṇī was married to Vasudeva, a Vṛṣṇi. Therefore they sit, sleep and eat together with us.

Text 68.26

cāmara-vyajane śaṅkham ātapatraṁ ca pāṇḍuram
kirīṭam āsanaṁ śayyāṁ bhuñjate 'smad-upekṣayā

Only because we looked the other way could they enjoy the cāmara and the conch, white umbrella, throne, and royal bed.

COMMENTARY: They enjoy fanning by two cāmaras.

Text 68.27

alaṁ yadūnāṁ naradeva-lāñchanair
dātuḥ pratīpaiḥ phaṇinām ivāmṛtam
ye 'smat-prasādopacitā hi yādavā
ājñāpayanty adya gata-trapā bata

No longer should the Yadus be allowed to use these royal symbols, which now cause trouble for those who gave them, like milk fed to poisonous snakes. Having prospered by our grace, these Yādavas have now lost all shame and are daring to command us!

COMMENTARY: The symbols now act unfavorably for us, the givers. They are like milk given to a serpent. The instrumental case is not used in amṛta for metrical reasons. By our mercy they have prospered. That is well known (hi).

Text 68.28

katham indro 'pi kurubhir bhīṣma-droṇārjunādibhiḥ
adattam avarundhīta siṁha-grastam ivoraṇaḥ

How would even Indra dare usurp anything that Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Arjuna or the other Kurus have not given him? It would be like a lamb claiming the lion's kill.

COMMENTARY: They speak out of pride. How could they get their kingdom without the help of Arjuna and others?

Text 68.29

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca
janma-bandhu-śrīyonnaddha-madās te bharatarṣabha
āśrāvya rāmaṁ durvācyam asabhyāḥ puram āviśan

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: O best of the Bhāratas, after the arrogant Kurus, thoroughly puffed up by the opulence of their high birth and relations, had spoken these harsh words to Balarāma, they turned and went back to their city.

COMMENTARY: After making Balarāma hear, with anger and loud voices (ā-śrāvya), those who were without politeness (asabhyāḥ) entered the city, quickly, turning their backs to him (ā-viśan). Bhīṣma and some others remained, however.

Text 68.30

dṛṣṭvā kurūnāṁ dauḥśīlyaṁ śrutvāvācyāni cācyutaḥ
avocat kopa-saṁrabdho duṣprekṣyaḥ prahasan muhuḥ

Seeing the bad character of the Kurus and hearing their nasty words, the infallible Balarāma became filled with rage. His countenance frightful to behold, he laughed repeatedly and spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY: Hearing and seeing their anger (dauḥśīlyam), Balarāma, full of all powers (acyutaḥ), overcome with anger, hard to look at because of his increasing frown (duṣprekṣyaḥ), laughed continuously from anger (pra-hasan). Sometimes ahasan is seen.

Text 68.31

nūnaṁ nānā-madonnaddhāḥ śāntiṁ necchanty asādhavaḥ
teṣāṁ hi praśamo daṇḍaḥ paśūnāṁ laguḍo yathā

[Lord Balarāma said:] "Clearly the many passions of these scoundrels have made them so proud that they do not want peace. Then let them be pacified by physical punishment, as animals are with a stick.

COMMENTARY: Only (hi) punishing them will work, not pacifying words.

Text 68.32–33

aho yadūn su-saṁrabdhān kṛṣṇaṁ ca kupitaṁ śanaiḥ
sāntvayitvāham eteṣāṁ śamam icchann ihāgataḥ
ta ime manda-matayaḥ kalahābhiratāḥ khalāḥ
taṁ mām avajñāya muhur durbhāṣān mānino 'bruvan

"Ah, only gradually was I able to calm the furious Yadus and Kṛṣṇa, who was also enraged. Desiring peace for these Kauravas, I came here. But they are so dull-headed, fond of quarrel and mischievous by nature that they have repeatedly disrespected me. Out of conceit they dared to address me with harsh words!

COMMENTARY: Aho expresses lamentation. The Yadus were ready to come to fight or were very angry (su-saṁrabdhān). To pacify them I came here, wanting to avoid a conflict. Those with whom I tried to make peace (te) are foolish since they insulted me and spoke bad words. Instead of tam mām sometimes ye mām is seen.

Text 68.34

nograsenaḥ kila vibhur bhoja-vṛṣṇy-andhakeśvaraḥ
śakrādayo loka-pālā yasyādeśānuvartinaḥ

"Is not King Ugrasena, the lord of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas, fit to command, when Indra and other planetary rulers obey his orders?

COMMENTARY: "But you have not spoken correctly." Is not Ugrasena capable? Or he is certainly capable, is he not?

Text 68.35

sudharmākramyate yena pārijāto 'marāṅghripaḥ
ānīya bhujyate so 'sau na kilādhyāsanārhaṇaḥ

"That same Kṛṣṇa who occupies the Sudharmā assembly hall and for his enjoyment took the pārijāta tree from the immortal devatās—that very

Kṛṣṇa is not fit to sit on a royal throne?

COMMENTARY: In criticizing the Yadus, they also criticized Kṛṣṇa. For the pleasure of humans, Kṛṣṇa defeated the devatās for the pārijāta flower. Is he not worthy to sit on the throne? Kila expresses mockery or shaking the head. Certainly, he is worthy. Or certainly he is worthy but others who are insignificant are not.

Text 68.36

yasya pāda-yugaṁ sākṣāc chrīr upāste 'khileśvarī
sa nārhati kila śrīśo naradeva-paricchadān

"The goddess of fortune herself, ruler of the entire universe, worships his feet. And does not the master of the goddess of fortune deserve the paraphernalia of a mortal king?

COMMENTARY: He has greatness, because Lakṣmī, his svarūpa-śakti, queen of Vaikuṇṭha, directly worships his feet. Or Rukmiṇī, his full manifestation, who controls even me, worships his feet. What to speak of low Māyā-devī, who gives wealth to Svarga. The word śrīśaḥ again makes the same point.

Text 68.37

yasyāṅghri-paṅkaja-rajo 'khila-loka-pālair
mauly-uttamair dhṛtam upāsita-tīrtha-tīrtham
brahmā bhavo 'ham api yasya kalāḥ kalāyāḥ
śrīś codvahema ciram asya nṛpāsanaṁ kva

The devatās with the best crowns take the dust of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, which is the source of holiness for all places of pilgrimage, on their heads. Great devatās like Brahmā and Śiva, and even the goddess of fortune and I, are simply parts of his spiritual identity, and we also carefully carry that dust on our heads. And still Kṛṣṇa is not fit to use the royal insignia or even sit on the royal throne?

COMMENTARY: He is worshipped by the wealth of all beings. The singular rajaḥ is used to express a type, and to indicate that even one particle of dust from his feet is worshipped. Is such a person not fit for the throne? He laughs in anger. Kva expresses the lowest position.

Text 68.38

bhuñjate kurubhir dattaṁ bhū-khaṇḍaṁ vṛṣṇayaḥ kila
upānahaḥ kila vayaṁ svayaṁ tu kuravaḥ śiraḥ

"We Vṛṣṇis enjoy only whatever small parcel of land the Kurus allow us? And we are indeed shoes, whereas the Kurus are the head?

COMMENTARY: "The criticism was directed to the Yādavas, not to the Lord." He laughs. Do we Yādavas enjoy only a small piece of land given by them? Because we are Yādavas, they also criticize us. Even angrier he says "Are we the shoes?"

Text 68.39

aho aiśvarya-mattānāṁ mattānām iva māninām
asambaddhā giro rukṣāḥ kaḥ sahetānuśāsītā

"Just see how these puffed-up Kurus are intoxicated with their so-called power, like ordinary drunken men! What actual ruler, with the power to command, would tolerate their foolish, harsh words?

COMMENTARY: They have lost all discrimination because of wealth (aiśvarya-mattānām). They are proud (māninām). They have no respect for rules (sambaddhāḥ). Moreover they are rough in choice and meaning of the words. A ruler should not tolerate these words. Otherwise there will be no control.

Text 68.40

adya niṣkauravaṁ pṛthvīṁ kariṣyāmīty amarṣitaḥ
gṛhītvā halam uttasthau dahann iva jagat-trayam

"Today I shall rid the earth of the Kauravas!" declared the furious Balarāma. Thus he took his plow weapon and rose up as if to set the three worlds ablaze.

COMMENTARY: I will rid the earth Kauravas today! He said this out of anger.

Text 68.41

lāṅgalāgreṇa nagaram udvidārya gajāhvayam
vicakarṣa sa gaṅgāyāṁ praharişyann amarṣitaḥ

The Lord angrily dug up Hastināpura with the tip of his plow and began to drag it, intending to cast the entire city into the Gaṅgā.

COMMENTARY: He began to pull the city to the Gaṅgā forcibly in order to destroy the city. Or he dragged the city to make if fall into the Gaṅgā. By his will, his plough became very long.

Text 68.42–43

jala-yānam ivāghūrṇaṁ gaṅgāyāṁ nagaraṁ patat
ākṛṣyamāṇam ālokya kauravāḥ jāta-sambhramāḥ
tam eva śaraṇaṁ jagmuḥ sa-kuṭumbā jijīviṣavaḥ
sa-lakṣmaṇaṁ puras-kṛtya sāmbaṁ prāñjalayaḥ prabhum

Seeing that their city was tumbling about like a raft at sea as it was being dragged away, and that it was about to fall into the Gaṅgā, the Kauravas became terrified. To save their lives they approached the Lord for shelter, taking their families with them. Placing Sāmba and Lakṣmaṇā in front, they joined their palms in supplication.

COMMENTARY: First they saw the city wobbling, and then falling into the Gaṅgā. Then they saw Balarāma pulling it. Then they tried to save their lives. They lost all pride. They approached Balarāma, taking shelter of him as the Lord (prabhum). Or, they approached him since he was capable (prabhum) of forgiving their offense. Or prabhum can modify sāmbam. Putting Sāmba in front as capable of stopping the disaster, they approached Balarāma. If the city fell in the water, Sāmba and Lakṣmaṇā would be in danger. Thus to please Balarāma they put Sāmba in front as an offering first. But Balarāma was not worried about Sāmba falling in the water. He pulled the city only to scare them.

Text 68.44

rāma rāmākhilādhāra prabhāvaṁ na vidāma te
mūḍhānāṁ naḥ ku-buddhīnāṁ kṣantum arhasy atikramam

[The Kauravas said:] O bliss of the universe, shelter of everything! We know nothing of your power. Please excuse our offense, for we are ignorant and misguided.

COMMENTARY: “Why did they surrender?” O Balarāma who gives happiness to the universe (rāma)! Out of fear they repeat his name. “I give happiness to devotees only, not to others.” There is no other shelter for the universe except you. O shelter of everything (akhilādhāra)! Instead of atikramam, sometimes adhīśvara is seen. You are the lord of even Brahmā (adhīśvara). Therefore please excuse our offense. Or, you should excuse us. “Great offenders like you should not be excused.” We were ignorant and moreover filled with poor discrimination or false pride (ku-buddīnām), since we did not know your powers. Therefore you should not consider our offense since you are merciful to the fallen.

Text 68.45

sthity-utpatty-apyayānāṁ tvam eko hetur nirāśrayaḥ
lokān krīḍanakān īśa krīḍatas te vadanti hi

You alone cause the creation, maintenance and annihilation of the cosmos, and of you there is no prior cause. Indeed, O Lord, authorities say that the worlds are mere playthings for you as you perform your pastimes.

COMMENTARY: This verse shows how, as the Supreme Lord, he is non-different from the puruṣa known as Saṅkarṣaṇa who manifests the universe. Maintenance (sthiti) is mentioned first since they wanted Balarāma to protect them. Everything depends only on you (nijāśrayaḥ). And you have no dependence on us. The worlds are your playthings. Lokavat tu līlā-kaivalyam: the Lord has pastimes similar to the activities of this world. (Brahma-sūtra 2.1.33) In Nārāyaṇādhyātma it is said:

sṛṣṭyādikaṁ harer naiva prayojanam apekṣya tu
kurute kevalānandāt yathā mattasya nartanam

The creation of the Lord does not depend on a goal. He does this simply out of bliss, like the dancing of a madman.

Because everything is caused by your will, you must have all knowledge. Since we are engaged as playthings by you, do as you wish. Thus, you should forgive us for our fault since we are foolish.

Another version has nijāśrayaḥ. Since you depend only on your devotees, acts like creation are only incidental for you. Thus you engage others in

creation, etc.

Text 68.46

tvam eva mūrdhnīdam ananta līlayā
bhū-maṇḍalaṁ bibharṣi sahasra-mūrdhan
ante ca yaḥ svātma-niruddha-viśvaḥ
śeṣe 'dvitīyaḥ pariśiṣyamāṇaḥ

O unlimited one of a thousand heads, as your pastime you carry this bhū-maṇḍala upon one of your heads. At the time of annihilation you withdraw the entire universe within your body and, remaining all alone, lie down to rest.

COMMENTARY: Protection is your main business because you hold up the earth by your great mercy in your specialized expansion. O unlimited one! Therefore you can have a thousand heads. Therefore with even one of your heads you can support the whole world. Even during destruction you do not deviate from maintaining everything. During the daily destruction after Brahmā's day the universe remains protected within your form as Garbhodakaśāyī. You lie down with no one else except you (advitīyaḥ) in the three worlds at this time.

Text 68.47

kopas te 'khila-śikṣārthaṁ na dveṣān na ca matsarāt
bibhrato bhagavan sattvaṁ sthiti-pālana-tatparaḥ

Your anger is meant for instructing everyone; it is not a manifestation of hatred or envy. O Supreme Lord, you sustain the pure mode of goodness, and you become angry only to maintain and protect this world.

COMMENTARY: Even your anger is for protecting the universe. Instead of khalu (certainly) sometimes akhila is seen. Your anger is for the purpose of teaching everyone. It is for everyone's benefit since you are inclined to protect everyone during the time the universe remains (shtiti-pālana-tatparaḥ). Your anger is not because of hatred or envy since you nourish sattva-guṇa in the form of Viṣṇu. It is not just a favor you do. O Lord revealing natural power, pastimes and wealth (bhagavān)! You maintain the worlds because of your natural compassion for its people.

Text 68.48

namas te sarva-bhūtātman sarva-śakti-dharāvyaya
viśva-karman namas te 'stu tvāṁ vayaṁ śaraṇaṁ gatāḥ

We bow down to you, O Soul of all beings, O wielder of all potencies, O tireless maker of the universe! Offering you obeisances, we take shelter of you.

COMMENTARY: Seeing that he did not stop pulling the city, they became terrified. They began chanting his dear names and bowing down in surrender. We offer respects because you are the soul of all beings, Paramātmā. Thus you have all powers because you alone arrange for the senses to function (sarva-śaktidhara) and you are endowed with all powers (avyaya). Therefore you create the universe (viśva-karman). Let us offer obeisance. Let that remain eternally (astu). Because of the qualities listed, you are worthy of being our shelter. You are supremely powerful because you possess all śaktis. You are inexhaustible in those powers. Therefore you create the universe.

Text 68.49

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ prapannaiḥ saṁvignair vepamānāyanair balaḥ
prasāditaḥ su-prasanno mā bhaiṣṭety abhayaṁ dadau

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus propitiated by the Kurus, whose city was trembling and who were surrendering to him in great distress, Balarāma gave up his anger and was pleased with them. He said, "Do not be afraid." He thus took away their fear.

COMMENTARY: They were completely distressed (saṁvignaiḥ) because the city was shaking and moving. Balarāma gave up his anger (suprasannaḥ). He withdrew his plough from the base of the wall and restored the city.

Text 68.50–51

duryodhanaḥ pāribarhaṁ kuñjarān ṣaṣṭi-hāyanān
dadau ca dvādaśa-śatāny ayutāni turaṅgamān
rathānāṁ ṣaṭ-sahasrāṇi raukmāṇāṁ sūrya-varcasām
dāsīnāṁ niṣka-kaṇṭhīnāṁ sahasraṁ duhitṛ-vatsalaḥ

Duryodhana, being very affectionate to his daughter, gave as her dowry 1,200 sixty-year-old elephants, 120,000 horses, 6,000 golden chariots shining like the sun, and 1,000 maidservants with jeweled lockets on their necks.

COMMENTARY: Duryodhana gave this wealth because of affection for his daughter. He thought, "If Balarāma and the people there are not pleased, my daughter will not be respected."

Text 68.52

pratigṛhya tu tat sarvaṁ bhagavān sātvatarṣabhaḥ
sa-sutaḥ sa-snuṣaḥ prāyāt suhṛdbhir abhinanditaḥ

The Supreme Lord, chief of the Yādavas, accepted all these gifts and then took permission to leave with his son and daughter-in-law after giving his devotees bliss.

COMMENTARY: Though he was already endowed with all wealth (bhagavān), he accepted all of this since he was excellent towards his devotees (sātvatarṣabhaḥ), having affection for his devotees like Bhīṣma. Or, he was the best of Yadus. He did this to please them. Giving his friends bliss he was permitted to leave (abhinanditaḥ).

Text 68.53

tataḥ praviṣṭaḥ sva-puraṁ halāyudhaḥ
sametya bandhūn anurakta-cetasaḥ
śaśaṁsa sarvaṁ yadu-puṅgavānāṁ
madhye sabhāyāṁ kuruṣu sva-ceṣṭitam

Then Halāyudha entered Dvārakā and met his relatives, whose hearts were all bound to him in loving attachment. In the assembly hall he reported to the Yadu leaders everything about his dealings with the Kurus.

COMMENTARY: He entered his own city magnificently (pra-viṣṭaḥ), with singing and auspicious music and met his relatives Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva and others. Because of anurāga they always watched the road for his return (anurakta-cetasaḥ). Among the leaders of the Yadus like Ugrasena, he told

them all his actions in the assembly in order to give them joy. However, he told only a little about the Kurus' bad words.

Text 68.54

adyāpi ca puraṁ hy etat sūcayad rāma-vikramam
samunnataṁ dakṣiṇato gaṅgāyām anudṛśyate

Even today the city of Hastināpura is visibly elevated on its southern side along the Gaṅgā, thus showing the signs of Balarāma's prowess.

COMMENTARY: The great strength of Baladeva is described with joy. Even today that city (pointing it out) is seen continually (anudṛśyate) to be raised on its southern side on the river. May the devotees see with astonishment my boldness and rashness as a commentator. Where Śrīdhara Svāmī is silent (writing a sparse commentary for this chapter), I have been talkative.

Chapter Sixty-nine
Nārada Muni Visits Lord Kṛṣṇa's Palaces in Dvārakā

Text 69.1–6

śrī-śuka uvāca
narakaṁ nihataṁ śrutvā tathodvāhaṁ ca yoṣitām
kṛṣṇenaikena bahvīnāṁ tad-didṛkṣuḥ sma nāradaḥ
citraṁ bataitad ekena vapuṣā yugapat pṛthak
gṛheṣu dvy-aṣṭa-sāhasraṁ striya eka udāvahat
ity utsuko dvāravatīṁ devarṣir draṣṭum āgamat
puṣpitopavanārāma-dvijāli-kula-nāditām
utphullendīvarāmbhoja-kahlāra-kumudotpalaiḥ
churiteṣu saraḥsūccaiḥ kūjitāṁ haṁsa-sārasaiḥ
prāsāda-lakṣair navabhir juṣṭāṁ sphāṭika-rājataiḥ
mahā-marakata-prakhyaiḥ svarṇa-ratna-paricchadaiḥ
vibhakta-rathyā-patha-catvarāpaṇaiḥ
śālā-sabhābhī rucirāṁ surālayaiḥ
saṁsikta-mārgāṅgana-vīthi-dehalīṁ
patat-patāka-dhvaja-vāritātapām

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing that Kṛṣṇa had killed Narakāsura and had alone married many brides, Nārada Muni desired to see the Lord in this situation. He thought, "It is quite amazing that in a single body Lord Kṛṣṇa simultaneously married sixteen thousand women, each in a separate palace." Thus the sage of the devatās eagerly went to Dvārakā. The city was filled with the sounds of birds and bees flying about the parks and pleasure gardens, while its lakes, crowded with blooming indīvara, ambhoja, kahlāra, kumuda and utpala lotuses, resounded with the calls of swans and cranes. Dvārakā boasted nine hundred thousand royal palaces, all constructed with crystal and silver and decorated with huge emeralds. Inside these palaces, the furnishings were bedecked with gold and jewels. Traffic moved along a well laid-out system of boulevards, roads, intersections and marketplaces, and many assembly houses and temples graced the charming city. The roads, courtyards, yards and

threshold altars were all sprinkled with water and shaded from the sun's heat by banners waving from flagpoles.

COMMENTARY: After killing Naraka, Kṛṣṇa brought all the captive girls to Dvārakā and married them. Nārada wanted to see this. Since Nārada went there, Śukadeva settled on a new story suitable for narration since it was filled with rasa. Concentrating, he begins to praise Dvārakā. Hearing that Naraka had been killed along with his troops (ni-hatam) by Kṛṣṇa and being joyful, Nārada wanted to see how he had married so many women. This is most astonishing (citram bataitad). He was surprised on hearing about this, even though he was omniscient and could know all of this by his nature. The events were always being glorified by everyone with the greatest astonishment. He wanted to see Kṛṣṇa's powers. Sma indicates that this was well known.

Having shown Nārada's astonishment, and related his going to Dvārakā to see the powers of Kṛṣṇa, Śukadeva then describes Dvārakā in five verses (2-6) in order to nourish the story. His astonishment on seeing and his going there are described in one and a half verses (2-3). Ah! This is amazing, filled with his acintya-śakti. "What was astonishing?" One person had married sixteen thousand women. "One sees persons marrying even more than that number of women." But he did this simultaneously. "Like Saubhari, Nārada and others could expand their bodies. They could simultaneously do this. Why is it amazing for him?" He did this with one body. "One body can be expanded into many. It is not astonishing that these many bodies could marry the women at once, since he is more powerful than Saubhari." He appeared in each of the houses. He married them all fully (ud-ā-vahat). Thinking in this way (iti), he thus sent to Dvārakā wanting to see Kṛṣṇa's powers.

In describing Dvārakā, first the exterior portion is described. There were pleasant gardens filled with the chirping of birds. Lakes inside and outside of the groves were decorated with blossoming blue, white and pink lotuses as well as fragrant ones (kahlāra). Swans warbled loudly because of intoxication from drinking the nectar. The interiors of the buildings are then described. The palaces were made of crystal and silver.

Verse 6 is in a longer meter to express bliss in describing the interior of the city. The main roads (rathyā) and various other roads (patha) were constructed spaciously (vibhakta). The city was attractive with various buildings for horses, etc., and assembly halls, all placed in locations according to use, as well as temples. The buildings are in order of increasing attractiveness. The roads, public squares, private yards (vīthi) and altars in the doorways (dehalīm) were all completely soaked with perfumed water. The order of the list is from public areas to private dwellings. The beauty above is then described: flying flags created shade.

Text 69.7–8

tasyām antaḥ-puraṁ śrīmad arcitaṁ sarva-dhiṣṇya-paiḥ
hareḥ sva-kauśalaṁ yatra tvaṣṭrā kārtsnyena darśitam
tatra ṣoḍaśabhiḥ sadma-sahasraiḥ samalaṅkṛtam
viveśaikatomaṁ śaureḥ patnīnāṁ bhavanaṁ mahat

In the city of Dvārakā was a beautiful private quarter worshiped by the planetary rulers. This district, where Viśvakarmā had shown all his divine skill, was the residential area of Kṛṣṇa, and thus it was gorgeously decorated by the sixteen thousand palaces of Kṛṣṇa's queens. Nārada Muni entered an immense palace.

COMMENTARY: The palaces are described in six verses (7-12). The place was endowed with all beauty and wealth (śrīmat). In this area, Viśvakarmā's extraordinary (sva) architectural skill was continually revealed. These sixteen thousand palaces were more attractive than the buildings previously described, being completely ornamented (sam-alaṅkṛtam). Nārada entered a great palace—the oldest and best (mahat), belonging to Rukmiṇī. This is also mentioned in verse 14. This was the reason he entered this palace first. The phrase hareḥ sva-kauśalaṁ yatra tvaṣṭrā kārtsnyena darśitam can also mean "The palaces were manifested by Viśvakarmā through the instructions of the Lord, not by Viśvakarmā's own powers."

Text 69.9–12

viṣṭabdhaṁ vidruma-stambhair vaidūrya-phalakottamaiḥ
indranīla-mayaiḥ kuḍyair jagatyā cāhata-tviṣā

vitānair nirmitais tvaṣṭrā muktā-dāma-vilambibhiḥ
dāntair āsana-paryaṅkair maṇy-uttama-pariṣkṛtaiḥ
dāsībhir niṣka-kaṇṭhībhiḥ su-vāsobhir alaṅkṛtam
pumbhiḥ sa-kañcukoṣṇīṣa su-vastra-maṇi-kuṇḍalaiḥ
ratna-pradīpa-nikara-dyutibhir nirasta-
dhvāntaṁ vicitra-valabhīṣu śikhaṇḍino 'ṅga
nṛtyanti yatra vihitāguru-dhūpam akṣair
niryāntam īkṣya ghana-buddhaya unnadantaḥ

Supporting the palace were coral pillars decoratively inlaid with vaidūrya gems. Sapphires bedecked the walls, and the floors glowed with perpetual brilliance. In that palace Tvaṣṭā had arranged canopies with hanging strands of pearls; there were also seats and beds fashioned of ivory and precious jewels. In attendance were many well-dressed maidservants bearing lockets on their necks, and also armor-clad guards with turbans, fine uniforms and jeweled earrings. The glow of numerous jewel-studded lamps dispelled all darkness in the palace. My dear King, on the ornate ridges of the roof danced loudly crying peacocks, who saw the fragrant aguru incense escaping through the holes of the latticed windows and mistook it for a cloud.

COMMENTARY: Taking one palace, the main elements are first described. Āhata-tviṣā means that the place never got dirty. It was always brilliant. The main furnishings are described. Viśvakarmā produced the couches and seats. The attendants are then described. There were female servants and young boys dressed in fine lower and upper cloths (su-vastra). The beauty above is described. The lamps were situated in the rooms. From this it is understood that Nārada had arrived at night. Though he saw activities of different parts of the day, he actually went simultaneously to each palace to examine the Lord's activities. When he saw the Lord sitting on the couch it was evening. The peacocks could see the aguru incense smoke though it was night, because of the presence of jeweled lamps. The palaces of the other queens were similar.

Text 69.13

tasmin samāna-guṇa-rūpa-vayaḥ-su-veṣa-
dāsī-sahasra-yutayānusavaṁ gṛhiṇyā

vipro dadarśa camara-vyajanena rukma-
daṇḍena sātvata-patiṁ parivījayantyā

In that palace the learned brāhmaṇa saw the Lord of the Sātvatas, Kṛṣṇa, together with his wife, who fanned him with a gold-handled cāmara. She personally served him in this way, even though she was constantly attended by a thousand maidservants equal to her in personal character, beauty, youth and fine dress.

COMMENTARY: In that house Nārada saw Kṛṣṇa with Rukmiṇī, the mistress of the house, fanning him with a cāmara, using her whole body, out of great devotion, along with thousands of maid servants.

"How could Nārada suddenly enter?" He was a brāhmaṇa. This by itself allowed him to enter. Nārada, who is the guru of scriptures on devotion, saw Kṛṣṇa the Lord of the devotees (sātvata-patim). This indicates that on seeing Kṛṣṇa intense bhakti arose in him. Or he saw the Lord of the Yadus. This indicates that Nārada was surprised to see Kṛṣṇa involved in such intimate dealings.

Text 69.14

taṁ sannirīkṣya bhagavān sahasotthita-śrī-
paryaṅkataḥ sakala-dharma-bhṛtāṁ variṣṭhaḥ
ānamya pāda-yugalaṁ śirasā kirīṭa-
juṣṭena sāñjalir avīviśad āsane sve

The Supreme Lord is the greatest upholder of dharma. Thus when he noticed Nārada, he rose at once from Rukmiṇī's bed, bowed his crowned head at Nārada's feet and, joining his palms, had the sage sit in his own seat.

COMMENTARY: Seeing Nārada suddenly appear close by (sannir-īkṣya), overcome with joy, he immediately rose though he was Bhagavān. He bowed his head, endowed with a crown. He was attached to touching his feet, while wearing his distinguishing marks like the Kaustubha gem. He bowed his head since he was absorbed in his pastime of instituting proper dharma. He placed Nārada in his own seat.

Text 69.15

tasyāvanijya caraṇau tad-apaḥ sva-mūrdhnā
bibhraj jagad-gurutamo ’pi satāṁ patir hi
brahmaṇya-deva iti yad guṇa-nāma yuktaṁ
tasyaiva yac-caraṇa-śaucam aśeṣa-tīrtham

The Lord bathed Nārada’s feet and then put the water on his own head. Although Kṛṣṇa was most worthy of worship in the universe and the master of his devotees, and though the water that bathed the Lord’s own feet became the Gaṅgā, the ultimate holy shrine, it was proper for him to behave in this way, for he favored the brāhmaṇas.

COMMENTARY: Because (hi) he favored the brāhmaṇas, he put the water on his head. His foot water was the embodiment of all tīrthas or had within it all tīrthas.

Text 69.16

sampūjya deva-ṛṣi-varyam ṛṣiḥ purāṇo
nārāyaṇo nara-sakho vidhinoditena
vāṇyābhibhāṣya mitayāmṛta-miṣṭayā taṁ
prāha prabho bhagavate karavāma he kim

After fully worshiping the great sage of the devatās according to Vedic injunctions, Kṛṣṇa, who is himself the original sage—Nārāyaṇa, the friend of Nara—conversed with Nārada, and the Lord’s measured speech was as sweet as nectar. Finally the Lord asked Nārada, “What may we do for you, our Lord and master?”

COMMENTARY: The Lord was capable of doing proper worship because he was the establisher of all mantras (ṛṣiḥ). He was always young (purāṇaḥ), remaining in the same condition because of being Svayam Bhagavān.

yadyapy asau pārśva-gato raho-gatas
tathāpi tasyāṅghri-yugaṁ navaṁ navam
pade pade kā virameta tat-padāc
calāpi yac chrīr na jahāti karhicit

Although Kṛṣṇa was constantly by their sides, as well as exclusively alone, his feet appeared to them to be newer and newer. The goddess of fortune, although by nature always restless and moving, could not quit the Lord’s

feet. So what woman can be detached from those feet, having once taken shelter of them? SB 1.11.33

Thus the Lord was not old but acted like an ancient sage. The Lord had appeared in the world in the form of Nārāyaṇa, the friend of Nara, for instituting such rules of dharma. This means that Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi had entered into Kṛṣṇa when Kṛṣṇa appeared in the world.

tāv imau vai bhagavato harer aṁśāv ihāgatau
bhāra-vyayāya ca bhuvaḥ kṛṣṇau yadu-kurūdvahau

These two portions of the Lord have entered Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, best of the Yadu and Kuru dynasties for relieving the earth of its burden. SB 4.1.59

Kṛṣṇa made his appearance to demonstrate that all forms are aṁśas or kalās of Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa. Nārada was the bests of sages (ṛṣi-varyam). He appeared, following the appearance of the Lord who was also a sage (ṛṣiḥ). “Since Kṛṣṇa is Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, he is Nārada’s guru. How can he worship Nārada?” He did this according to the rules (vidhinoditena). In playing the role of a kṣatriya, it was proper from him to worship the brāhmaṇa. Lokavat līlā-kaivalyam: the Lord performs his pastimes like the play of an ordinary person. (Brahma-sūtra 2.1.33)

Another meaning is as follows.

nārāyaṇas tvaṁ na hi sarva-dehinām
ātmāsy adhīśākhila-loka-sākṣī
nārāyaṇo ’ṅgaṁ nara-bhū-jalāyanāt
tac cāpi satyaṁ na tavaiva māyā

O Lord, of whom Mahāviṣnū is your expansion! Nārāyaṇa, Mahāviṣṇu, the source of the other puruṣas is not you. Nor is the third puruṣa, dwelling within all beings, nor is the second puruṣa, the witness of all planets. Mahāviṣṇu, called Nārāyaṇa because he is the shelter of the Kāraṇa Ocean, which gives rise to the material creation, is simply your expansion. That expansion of yours is real, not illusory. SB 10.14.14

Though you are Bhagavān (of whom Nārāyaṇa is your expansion), you perform human pastimes (nara-sakhaḥ). There is a smṛti rule satyaṁ brūyāt priyaṁ brūyāt: speak truthfully and sweetly. According to this rule (vidhinoditena), the Lord praised him with sweet words (amṛta-miṣṭayā)

which were also true according to scriptural authority (mitayā), and made his request. “O master! You are my master because you are a brāhmaṇa. What can I do for you? Actually I can do nothing for you.” For fun he asks him. He covered his powers with his words. Seeing Nārada thinking of the Lord with reverence on seeing the spectacle of Dvārakā, the Lord seemed to scold him.

Text 69.17

śrī-nārada uvāca
naivādbhutaṁ tvayi vibho ’khila-loka-nāthe
maitrī janeṣu sakaleṣu damaḥ khalānām
niḥśreyasāya hi jagat-sthiti-rakṣaṇābhyāṁ
svairāvatāra urugāya vidāma suṣṭhu

Śrī Nārada said: O almighty Lord, it is no surprise that you, the ruler of all worlds, show friendship for all people and yet subdue the envious. As we well know, you descend by your sweet will in order to bestow bhakti and mukti to this universe by maintaining and protecting it. O most capable Lord! Thus your glories are widely sung.

COMMENTARY: This is not astonishing. The statement is in the neuter to express generality. It is in the singular, with the expectation that he will enlarge his topic. You give proper treatment (maitrī) though you are the master of all the people. In your form, you are equal to all. These two are not astonishing since you appear in order to give benefit to the world in the form of bhakti and mukti. You bestow these two according to the qualification of the person. This is all possible because you are capable (vibho). Thus you are praised by songs (urugāya).

Text 69.18

dṛṣṭaṁ tavāṅghri-yugalaṁ janatāpavargaṁ
brahmādibhir hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ
saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambaṁ
dhyāyaṁś carāmy anugṛhāṇa yathā smṛtiḥ syāt

Now I have seen your feet, which grant liberation to your devotees, which even Brahmā and other great personalities of unfathomable

intelligence can only meditate upon within their hearts, and which those who have fallen into the well of material existence resort to for deliverance. Please favor me so that I may constantly think of you as I travel about.

COMMENTARY: Your feet are the final result of meditation for your perfected pure devotees (janatāpavargam). Those feet are remembered with the greatest effort by the greatest person like Brahmā in the deepest functions of his heart. What to speak of those feet being suitable as the shelter for deliverance from saṁsāra for all those in this world of saṁsāra. It is my great fortune to have seen those feet. Thinking that such good fortune is very rare to be permanent, he prays. Meditating on those feet, let me wander about in this world. "That is to be achieved by your mind. Why do you have to pray?" Be merciful so that I can remember. Only by your mercy can this be achieved and not otherwise. Or, be merciful to me so that I can wander about meditating on your feet. Similarly be merciful, so that you will always remember me.

Text 69.19

tato 'nyad āviśad gehaṁ kṛṣṇa-patnyāḥ sa nāradaḥ
yogeśvareśvarasyāṅga yoga-māyā-vivitsayā

Nārada then entered the palace of another of Kṛṣṇa's wives, my dear King. He was eager to witness the yoga-māyā possessed by the master of all masters of mystic power.

COMMENTARY: After that, he entered the house of Satyabhāmā, going in order. It was previously mentioned that he thought of the Lord's yoga-māyā as most inconceivable (citraṁ bataitat). He wanted to experience that yoga-māyā by seeing its effects.

Text 69.20–22

dīvyantam akṣais tatrāpi priyayā coddhavena ca
pūjitaḥ parayā bhaktyā pratyutthānāsanādibhiḥ
pṛṣṭaś cāviduṣevāsau kadāyāto bhavān iti
kriyate kiṁ nu pūrṇānām apūrṇair asmad-ādibhiḥ

athāpi brūhi no brahman janmaitac chobhanaṁ kuru
sa tu vismita utthāya tūṣṇīm anyad agād gṛham

There he saw the Lord playing at dice with his beloved consort and his friend Uddhava. Kṛṣṇa worshiped Nārada by standing up, offering him a seat, and so on, and then, as if he did not know, asked him, "When did you arrive? What can needy persons like us do for those who are full in themselves? In any case, my dear brāhmaṇa, please make my life auspicious." Thus addressed, Nārada was astonished. He simply stood up silently and went to another palace.

COMMENTARY: The phrase from verse 13 "In this house also he saw Kṛṣṇa" should be supplied to verse 20. Or the sentence can be connected with the verb acaṣṭa in verse 23. Uddhava acted as the witness to the game of dice. The two words ca indicate that both Uddhava and Satyabhāmā were both principal persons in the game since the witness acts as an assistant. He was worshiped by the Lord. In one and a half lines, Kṛṣṇa asks questions. He asked as if he did not know that Nārada had come before (though just previously Kṛṣṇa had welcomed Nārada in Rukmiṇī's palace). The word iti should be placed after kuru in verse 22. When did you come? What can we do for you? He uses the plural to include Balarāma. Give us an order.

Text 69.23

tatrāpy acaṣṭa govindaṁ lālayantaṁ sutān śiśūn
tato 'nyasmin gṛhe 'paśyan majjanāya kṛtodyamam

This time Nārada saw that Kṛṣṇa was engaged as an affectionate father petting his small children. From there he entered another palace and saw Kṛṣṇa preparing to take his bath.

COMMENTARY: He saw Bhagavān, who had appeared on earth for having fun in various pastimes (govindam). As previously Nārada was worshipped with devotion. This is understood from the words tatrāpi. Here he was involved in artha, dharma and kāma as mentioned in verse 29. The order of the words sutān śiśūn is reversed in some versions. Though Nārada came in the evening, and though Nārada could travel from one palace to another at the speed of the mind by his powers of yoga, he saw pastimes taking place at various times of the day. By the powers of yoga-māyā, simultaneously

various times of day were presented. Otherwise he would not have been so amazed. Since Kṛṣṇa was preparing for his bath, it was early morning.

Text 69.24

juhvantaṁ ca vitānāgnīn yajantaṁ pañcabhir makhaiḥ
bhojayantaṁ dvijān kvāpi bhuñjānam avaśeṣitam

In one place the Lord was offering oblations into the sacrificial fires; in another, worshiping through the five mahā-yajñas; in another, feeding brāhmaṇas; and in yet another, eating the remnants of food left by brāhmaṇas.

COMMENTARY: The five mahā-yajñas are pāṭho homaś cātithīnāṁ saparyā tarpaṇaṁ baliḥ: reciting the Vedas, offering oblations into the sacrificial fire, waiting on guests, making offerings to the forefathers, and offering food to living entities in general. He performed worship through these five sacrifices. He ate food remnants. The last are actions performed at noon.

Text 69.25

kvāpi sandhyām upāsīnaṁ japantaṁ brahma vāg-yatam
ekatra cāsi-carmābhyāṁ carantam asi-vartmasu

Somewhere Kṛṣṇa was observing the rituals for worship at sunset by refraining from speech and quietly chanting the Gāyatrī mantra, and elsewhere he was moving about with sword and shield in the areas set aside for sword practice.

COMMENTARY: In some places he chanted the gāyatrī silently. This is done at three times of the day. In other places he was practicing the sword.

Text 69.26

aśvair gajai rathaiḥ kvāpi vicarantaṁ gadāgrajam
kvacic chayānaṁ paryaṅke stūyamānaṁ ca vandibhiḥ

In one place Gadāgraja was riding on horses, elephants and chariots, and in another place he was resting on his bed while bards recited his glories.

COMMENTARY: In some places he was moving about in various ways on horses, elephants and chariots. These are generally activities of the forenoon. He was accompanied by Gada. In other places he was resting on

his bed. This is an activity at the end of the night since he was being praised by bards.

Text 69.27

mantrayantaṁ ca kasmiṁścin mantribhiś coddhavādibhiḥ
jala-krīḍā-rataṁ kvāpi vāramukhyābalāvṛtam

Somewhere he was consulting with royal ministers like Uddhava, and somewhere else he was enjoying in the water, surrounded by many queens and courtesans.

COMMENTARY: He consulted with ministers like Uddhava and Vikadru. The word ca means Balarāma also (who was not a minister). It is also mentioned that Uddhava and others were also situated in all the palaces. In other places he was surrounded by queens (abalā) and the best courtesans.

Text 69.28

kutracid dvija-mukhyebhyo dadataṁ gāḥ sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ
itihāsa-purāṇāni śṛṇvantaṁ maṅgalāni ca

Somewhere he was giving well-decorated cows to exalted brāhmaṇas, and elsewhere he was listening to the auspicious narration of epic histories and Purāṇas.

COMMENTARY: The cows had gold horns. Giving cows in charity is generally an activity carried out at noon. Maṅgalāni refers to Vedic sūktas expressing peace or pure songs. These are activities of the afternoon. It is said itihāsa-purāṇabhyaṁ ṣāṣṭa-saptamakau nayet: the recitation of histories and Purāṇās takes place in the sixth and seventh parts of the day (afternoon).

Text 69.29

hasantaṁ hāsa-kathayā kadācit priyayā gṛhe
kvāpi dharmaṁ sevamānam artha-kāmau ca kutracit

Somewhere Kṛṣṇa was found enjoying the company of a particular wife by exchanging joking words with her. Somewhere else he was found engaged, along with his wife, in dharma. Somewhere Kṛṣṇa was found

engaged in matters of economic development, and somewhere else he was found enjoying.

COMMENTARY: In some house he was engaged in dharma with devotion (sevanāman). Elsewhere he was enjoying (kamau) and elsewhere he was undertaking actions for attaining wealth (artha).

Text 69.30

dhyāyantam ekam āsīnaṁ puruṣaṁ prakṛteḥ param
śuśrūṣantaṁ gurūn kvāpi kāmair bhogaiḥ saparyayā

Somewhere he was sitting alone, meditating on the Lord, who is transcendental to material nature, and somewhere he was rendering menial service to gurus, offering them desirable things and reverential worship.

COMMENTARY: Having described engagement in artha, dharma and kāma now engagement in liberation is described. Since he was engaged in pastimes of imitating human behavior, his actions for liberation are not a contradiction to Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Two necessary aṅgas (serving gurus and meditating) are described. He served gurus like Sāndīpani and Garga as well as Vasudeva by offering all necessary requirements that they desired along with service. These activities as well as those mentioned later such as worshipping devatās were performed at noon.

Text 69.31

kurvantaṁ vigrahaṁ kaiścit sandhiṁ cānyatra keśavam
kutrāpi saha rāmeṇa cintayantaṁ satāṁ śivam

In one place he was planning battles in consultation with some of his advisers, and in another place he was making peace. Somewhere Keśava and Balarāma were together pondering the welfare of the Pāṇḍavas.

COMMENTARY: In some places he was desiring or beginning to start battles or make peace. He did such activities to bewilder even Brahmā (ka) and Śiva (īśa). Thus he is called Keśava. In some houses he was about to make war and in some other houses he was about to make peace. Instead of anyatra sometimes anyaiḥ (by some others) is seen. He was thinking, “How to create auspiciousness for the Pāṇḍavas?”

Text 69.32

putrāṇāṁ duhitṝṇāṁ ca kāle vidhy-upayāpanam
dārair varais tat-sadṛśaiḥ kalpayantaṁ vibhūtibhiḥ

Nārada saw Kṛṣṇa engaged in getting his sons and daughters married to suitable brides and bridegrooms at the appropriate time, and the marriage ceremonies were being performed with great pomp.

COMMENTARY: Two verses (32-33) describe affairs in the family. He arranged brides of similar nature to his sons and similar grooms for his daughters and arranged for gifts along with the daughters' marriages. In some houses he married off his sons and in some houses he married off his daughters.

Text 69.33

prasthāpanopanayanair apatyānāṁ mahotsavān
vīkṣya yogeśvareśasya yeṣāṁ lokā visismire

Nārada observed how Kṛṣṇa, the master of all yoga masters, arranged to send away his daughters and sons-in-law, and also to receive them home again, at the time of great holiday celebrations. All the citizens were astonished to see these celebrations.

COMMENTARY: The people were astonished at the marriages as well as the coming and going of the daughters with their husbands since these events were unimaginable. "Why?" This was all done by the master of all masters of yoga. Or, it was done by the Lord of the Kumāras. The people of Vaikuṇṭha such as Garuḍa were astonished.

Text 69.34

yajantaṁ sakalān devān kvāpi kratubhir ūrjitaiḥ
pūrtayantaṁ kvacid dharmam kūrpārāma-maṭhādibhiḥ

Somewhere he was worshiping all the devatās with elaborate sacrifices, and elsewhere he was fulfilling dharma by doing public welfare work, such as the construction of wells, public parks and monasteries.

COMMENTARY: He worshipped his expansions, the devatās, in deity form and he worshipped the Vaiṣṇavas directly (sakalān devān) by elaborate

sacrifices and worship. He performed actions of pūrta (piety). Instead of maṭhādibhiḥ sometimes ālayādibhiḥ (temples) is seen.

Text 69.35

carantaṁ mṛgayāṁ kvāpi hayam āruhya saindhavam
ghnantaṁ tatra paśūn medhyān parītaṁ yadu-puṅgavaiḥ

In another place he was on a hunting expedition. Mounted on his Sindhī horse and accompanied by the most heroic of the Yadus, he was killing animals meant for offering in sacrifice.

COMMENTARY: He rode horses from Sindh province since they galloped fast. Surrounded by persons like Sātyaki he killed animals suitable for sacrifice (medhyān).

Text 69.36

avyakta-lingaṁ prakṛtiṣv antaḥ-pura-gṛhādiṣu
kvacic carantaṁ yogeśaṁ tat-tad-bhāva-bubhutsayā

Somewhere Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of mystic power, was moving about in disguise among the homes of ministers and other citizens in order to understand what each of them was thinking.

COMMENTARY: He went in disguise amongst his ministers and in his own palaces since he was the master of yoga. Though he was omniscient, he wanted to confirm their loyalty. He wanted to understand the intentions of his ministers and residents of his palaces because sometimes the līlā-śakti would appear (causing him to desire to spy) and sometimes would disappear, with a desire for pastimes. Nārada also went and saw other things but this is not stated because of fear of too many details. Or, Nārada, completely bewildered, gave up looking further.

Text 69.37

athovāca hṛṣīkeśaṁ nāradaḥ prahasann iva
yoga-māyodayaṁ vīkṣya mānuṣīm īyuṣo gatim

Having thus seen this display of the Lord's yoga-māyā, Nārada mildly laughed and then addressed Hṛṣīkeśa, who was adopting the behavior of a human being.

COMMENTARY: In another house, Nārada spoke to Kṛṣṇa. After seeing the Lord's powers, Nārada, feeling reserved, did not say anything. However the Lord knew his mind. Thus he is called Hṛṣīkeśa (master of the senses and mind). The word iva is used because Nārada laughed with a feeling of restriction, covering his mouth. He laughed because of the appearance of favorable actions of the acintya-śakti (yoga-māyā) of Kṛṣṇa who was completely absorbed in pastimes as a human, such as his adopting disguises and spying.

Text 69.38

vidāma yoga-māyās te durdarśā api māyinām
yogeśvarātman nirbhātā bhavat-pāda-niṣevayā

[Nārada said:] Now we understand yoga-māyā, which is difficult to comprehend, even for great mystics, O Supreme Soul, master of all mystic power. Only by serving your feet have I been able to perceive your powers.

COMMENTARY: The Lord himself explains what has happened later. Nārada, having seen all the pastimes filled with great pleasures, experienced great pleasure. But seeing the Lord's pastimes of worshipping devatās, he was sad. Not revealing this mood out of reservation, he speaks revealing his mind by hints in two verses (38-39). I know your acintya-śakti arising from your svarūpa (yoga-māyāḥ). I desire to know why you revealed these things. Though these powers are hard to see even for persons having various powers, O soul of the masters of yoga, by serving your feet, these powers have appeared by themselves in my mind. Or, O master of yoga! These powers appear in you (ātmani for ātman), arising from your svarūpa, but I know them by service to your feet.

Text 69.39

anujānīhi māṁ deva lokāṁs te yaśasāplutān
paryaṭāmi tavodgāyan līlā bhuvana-pāvanīḥ

O Lord, please give me your leave. I will wander about the worlds, which are flooded with your fame, loudly singing about your pastimes, which purify the universe.

COMMENTARY: Fearing that the Lord would say, "If you stay here a while, you will understand," Nārada then asks permission to leave. I cannot tolerate seeing you worshipping others. He then says he will glorify the Lord's fame. He says this in order to reveal his extreme lack of qualification. You are most worthy of worship (deva)! I will wander the worlds flooded with your glories. The word āpluta (flooded) suggests his glories are the greatest tīrtha.

Text 69.40

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
brahman dharmasya vaktāhaṁ kartā tad-anumoditā
tac chikṣayan lokam imam āsthitaḥ putra mā khidaḥ

The Supreme Lord said: O brāhmaṇa, I am the speaker of dharma, its performer and sanctioner. I observe dharma to teach them to the world, my child, so do not be disturbed.

COMMENTARY: The Lord spoke, understanding what was really on Nārada's mind since he was Hṛṣīkeśa. Since I am the speaker of dharma, I must perform dharma. Thus I give joy to others by performing dharma (anumoditā). Otherwise no one will respect dharma. Therefore I teach this dharma to the people. By words, by actions and by mentality, and by his very self, the Lord establishes dharma. O brāhmaṇa! You know this since you know the Vedas. To please people like you I protect the path of the Vedas. I remain here for that purpose. Not seeing Nārada give up his sadness, since he desired to leave and spread the Lord's bhakti by chanting his glories, he called out with affection, "O son!" to make him give up his respectful attitude of which he did not approve, by showing mercy with the proper mood of affection.

Text 69.41

śrī-śuka uvāca
ity ācarantaṁ sad-dharmān pāvanān gṛha-medhinām
tam eva sarva-geheṣu santam ekaṁ dadarśa ha

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus in every palace Nārada saw the Lord in his same personal form, executing the proper dharma that purifies those

engaged in household affairs.

COMMENTARY: He saw the Lord performing actions of proper conduct (sad-dharmān) which purify householders. This is praise for householder dharma. Or he saw the Lord performing the highest dharmas, such as serving the devotees, which purify all people in general by his performing them. He saw one Lord though the Lord was in many forms in all the houses. This one form was the Lord's supreme form since it is forbidden to see different forms in the Lord. Otherwise Nārada would not have had a doubt. He would not be astonished if they had been like Saubhari's expanded yogic forms.

Bhīṣma expressed this idea previously. amīlita-dṛg vyadhārayat: he fixed his wide-open eyes upon the Lord. (SB 1.9.30) Dṛśi-gocara eṣa āvir ātmā: the Lord has become visible to my eyes. SB 1.9.41

tam imam aham ajaṁ śarīra-bhājāṁ
hṛdi hṛdi dhiṣṭhitam ātma-kalpitānām
pratidṛśam iva naikadhārkam ekaṁ
samadhi-gato 'smi vidhūta-bheda-mohaḥ

Freed of the illusion of difference in the Lord's various forms, I have attained the Lord who is one though appearing to be many like the sun, seen by many people, who is the charioteer, but who is also in my heart, the unborn and is situated in the hearts of all the jīvas, who create their own bodies. SB 1.9.42

Just as the sun distributes light from far away, the Lord by his acintya-śakti appears in various places. The special nature of the example is that one form appears in many places.

Text 69.42

kṛṣṇasyānanta-vīryasya yoga-māyā-mahodayam
muhur dṛṣṭvā ṛṣir abhūd vismito jāta-kautukaḥ

Having repeatedly seen the vast mystic display of Kṛṣṇa, whose power is unlimited, the sage was amazed and filled with wonder.

COMMENTARY: Though Nārada was omniscient (ṛṣiḥ), seeing constantly the most excellent appearance of yoga-māyā which was beyond his

intelligence, filled with happiness, he was astonished.

Text 69.43

ity artha-kāma-dharmeṣu kṛṣṇena śraddhitātmanā
samyak sabhājitaḥ prītas tam evānusmaran yayau

Kṛṣṇa greatly honored Nārada, faithfully presenting him with gifts related to artha, kāma and dharma. Thus fully satisfied, the sage departed, constantly remembering the Lord.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa worshipped him completely with all fine articles, enjoyments and sacrifices (dharmeṣu). Whatever he wanted was supplied to please Nārada or others, since the Lord was filled with faith. After some days Nārada departed.

Text 69.44

evaṁ manuṣya-padavīm anuvartamāno
nārāyaṇo ʼkhila-bhavāya gṛhīta-śaktiḥ
reme ʼṇga ṣoḍaśa-sahasra-varāṅganānāṁ
sa-vrīḍa-sauhṛda-nirīkṣaṇa-hāsa-juṣṭaḥ

In this way the source of Nārāyaṇa imitated the ways of ordinary humans, manifesting his divine potencies for the benefit of all beings. Thus he enjoyed, dear King, in the company of his sixteen thousand exalted consorts. He was served by their shy, affectionate glances and laughter.

COMMENTARY: This verse describes the mutual love between the Lord and his consorts. He followed the conduct of a human being. He was the form who expands into all Nārāyaṇa forms. He was the chief Nārāyaṇa, Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, for the benefit of all his expansions since they were all within him. Accepting his śakti, he enjoyed, attaining pleasure by the smiles and glances filled with friendship and shyness of sixteen thousand women.

Text 69.45

yānīha viśva-vilayodbhava-vṛtti-hetuḥ
karmāṇy ananya-viṣayāṇi harīś cakāra

yas tv aṅga gāyati śṛṇoty anumodate vā
bhaktir bhaved bhagavati hy apavarga-mārge

Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate cause of universal creation, maintenance and destruction but in this avatāra, he performed activities which are non-different from himself. My dear King, anyone who chants about, hears about or simply appreciates the extraordinary activities will surely develop devotion for the Supreme Lord, the bestower of bhakti.

COMMENTARY: The results of chanting, hearing or appreciating the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are described using kaimutya. He is the cause of destruction, creation and maintenance, but in his complete avatāra (iha), he performed pastimes which are part of his svarūpa, or which are meant for his devotees, not for creation and destruction of the universe. Anyone who hears those activities attains bhakti for Svayam Bhagavān. This form is difficult to attain. Even after destroying saṁsāra a person can only attain the Lord by unobstructed bhakti (apavarga-mārge).

brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām

Having attained the state of Brahman, being a pure soul, he does not lament at the loss of what he has attained nor does he desire what he has not attained, and looks upon all beings as equal. He then manifests pure bhakti and even prema-bhakti. BG 18.54

Or the Lord is endowed with the path of bhakti-yoga (apavarga-mārge). Or he is sought (mārge) by the devotees who reject the four vargas (artha, dharma, kāma and mokṣa).

Chapter Seventy
Lord Kṛṣṇa's Daily Activities

Text 70.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
athoṣasy upavṛttāyāṁ kukkuṭān kūjato 'śapan
gṛhīta-kaṇṭhyaḥ patibhir mādhavyo virahāturāḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: As dawn approached, the wives of Mādhava, each embraced around the neck by her husband, cursed the crowing roosters. The ladies were disturbed that now they would be separated from him.

COMMENTARY: Related to Kṛṣṇa's performance of duties that Nārada saw, his daily activities are now described until verse 22. Sleeping on the lap of Kṛṣṇa, they used his left arm as a pillow. This indicates their great happiness. They were filled with pain when the morning came because of separation.

They cursed the pet cocks when they crowed, because by the crowing of the cocks they knew it was morning. They said to the birds, "You should die. You should become mute." Their husband would now get up and take a bath. "Husbands" is in the plural since he manifested many forms.

Text 70.2

vayāṁsy aroruvan kṛṣṇaṁ bodhayantīva vandinaḥ
gāyatsv aliṣv anidrāṇi mandāra-vana-vāyubhiḥ

The bees' buzzing, caused by the fragrant breeze from the garden of mandāra trees, roused the birds from sleep. And when the birds began to sing loudly, they woke Kṛṣṇa like court poets reciting his glories.

COMMENTARY: The birds woke up Kṛṣṇa like bards because they chirped loudly in a large group. "How did they wake up?" The bees hummed. In the early morning first the cool breeze blew. The branches of large trees began to sway. The bees in the flowers on the trees began to hum. The birds then woke up. This is a summary of the early morning.

Text 70.3

muhūrtaṁ taṁ tu vaidarbhī nāmṛṣyad ati-śobhanam
parirambhaṇa-viśleṣāt priya-bāhv-antaraṁ gatā

Lying in her beloved's arms, Rukmiṇī did not like this most auspicious hour, for it meant she would lose his embrace.

COMMENTARY: This time was an obstacle (viśleṣāt) to Kṛṣṇa embracing her.

Text 70.4–5

brāhme muhūrta utthāya vāry upaspṛśya mādhavaḥ
dadhyau prasanna-karaṇa ātmānaṁ tamasaḥ param
ekaṁ svayaṁ-jyotir ananyam avyayaṁ
sva-saṁsthayā nitya-nirasta-kalmaṣam
brahmākhyam asyodbhava-nāśa-hetubhiḥ
sva-śaktibhir lakṣita-bhāva-nirvṛtim

Mādhava would rise during the brāhma-muhūrta period and touch the water. With a clear mind he would then meditate upon himself, the single, self-luminous, unequaled and infallible Supreme Truth, known as Brahman (the greatest of all), who by his very nature ever dispels all contamination, and who, through his personal energies, which cause the creation and destruction of this universe, manifests his own pure and blissful existence.

COMMENTARY: Rātreś caturdaśo bhāgo muhūrto brāhma ucyate: the fourteen part of the night is called brāhma-muhūrta. To instruct the people and as a pleasant feature of his human pastimes he meditated and imitated various activities of humans. Becoming stable in mind by prāṇāyāma (prasanna-karaṇaḥ), he meditated on the Supreme Lord (ātmānam) beyond prakṛti (tamasaḥ param). Verse 5 describes the Supreme Lord. "His energies which cause creation and destruction" refers to the jīvas. "Creation and destruction" include other actions as well.

Or he meditated on his own form (ātmānam). His form was pure, beyond prakṛti. Śruti says tamasaḥ parastāt: the Lord is beyond prakṛti. (Mahā-nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad) His form is not a combination of elements: he is one (ekam). Śruti say ekam evādvtīyaṁ brahma: the Lord is one without a second. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad) Though he is one, he has intrinsic energies:

he manifests (jyotiḥ) variety by his own self (svayam). Śruti says ātma-prakāśam: the Lord is self manifesting[1]. Therefore nothing else exists except him. Śruti says neha nānāsti kiñcana: there is no other being at all. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad)

na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate
na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate
parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

He has no body and no senses. No one is equal to him or higher. His supreme power is manifold. He has intrinsic knowledge, strength and action. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

His glancing at prakṛti is carried out through his energy. Thus, unlike prakṛti, he is devoid of change or decay. The Lord's purity has been shown. He has no contamination at all. All contaminations are completely removed by his power (sva-saṁsthayā). Variety in prakṛti is created just by his proximity. Śruti says ayam ātmā apahata-pāpmā: the Lord is free of contamination. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad) He is called Brahman because he is greater than all others by his intrinsic qualities. Śruti says na tasya kāryam: he has no material actions. (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad) But he is known by his actions.

His svarūpa (bhāva) and bliss, which is one with his svarūpa (nirvṛtim), are observable because of his śaktis. Unconscious prakṛti was considered faulty and his śaktis which create and destroy prakṛti are also faulty. But this is his external energy. Thus he is not affected by it. His other śakti, innate to his svarūpa, which gives life to the inferior śakti, is referred to in this verse. His svarūpa of bliss is revealed by his internal śakti. Because he is the basis of all ātmās, he is the highest bliss and the highest form.

Or there is another meaning.

sa vai patiḥ syād akutobhayaḥ svayaṁ
samantataḥ pāti bhayāturaṁ janam
sa eka evetarathā mitho bhayaṁ
naivātmalābhād adhi manyate param

Since the Lord by nature has no fear, he protects all persons. He alone should be the husband. Otherwise there is mutual fear. The wise do not

accept anything better than attaining you. SB 5.18.20

Since it is logical there is one Lord, he reveals himself. “But it is also said that Saṅkarṣaṇa is the Lord.” No expansion is different from him (ananyam). As a pastime he expands in the catur-vyūha but they are not different from him. Though he manifests these forms, he is not perishable or exhaustible like a lake (avayam). Therefore by being permanently situated in his extraordinary form (saṁsthayā), his form never decreases (nirasta-kalmaṣam). From him arises what is known as Brahman.

madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca paraṁ brahmeti śabditam
vetsyasy anugṛhītaṁ me sampraśnair vivṛtaṁ hṛdi

By my mercy, you will realize my power known as the impersonal Brahman, which will be disclosed in your heart through questions and answers. SB 8.24.38

Viṣṇu Purāṇa says śubhāśrayasya cittasya sarva-gasya tathātmanaḥ: Viṣṇu is the shelter of all auspiciousness and the Brahman. And Gītā says brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham: I am the basis of Brahman. (BG 14.27) The rest of the verse has the same meaning.

Text 70.6

athāpluto ’mbhasy amale yathā-vidhi
kriyā-kalāpaṁ paridhāya vāsasī
cakāra sandhyopagamādi sattamo
hutānalo brahma jajāpa vāg-yataḥ

That most saintly of personalities would then bathe in sanctified water, dress himself in lower and upper garments and perform the entire sequence of prescribed rituals, beginning with worship at dawn. After offering oblations into the sacred fire, Kṛṣṇa would silently chant the gāyatrī mantra.

COMMENTARY: He would bath in tīrtha water since that is prescribed for the early morning bath. With great care he would go outside the city. He was the best of the saintly in order to show proper dharma (sattamaḥ). Or, he was most expert in the activities of dharma like sandhya rites.

Text 70.7–9

upasthāyārkam udyantaṁ tarpayitvātmanaḥ kalāḥ
devān ṛṣīn pitṝn vṛddhān viprān abhyarcya cātmavān
dhenūnāṁ rukma-śṛṅgīnāṁ sādhvīnāṁ mauktika-srajām
payasvinīnāṁ gṛṣṭīnāṁ sa-vatsānāṁ su-vāsasām
dadau rūpya-khurāgrāṇāṁ kṣaumājina-tilaiḥ saha
alaṅkṛtebhyo viprebhyo badvaṁ badvaṁ dine dine

Each day with attention the Lord worshiped the rising sun and propitiated the devatās, sages, forefathers, elders, brāhmaṇas and avatāra forms with worship. To those well-attired brāhmaṇas he would offer herds of tame and peaceful cows with gold-plated horns and pearl necklaces. These cows were also dressed in fine cloth, and the fronts of their hooves were plated with silver. Providers of abundant milk, they had each given birth only once and were accompanied by their calves. Daily the Lord gave many groups of 210,757,072 cows to the learned brāhmaṇas, together with linen, deerskins and sesame seeds.

COMMENTARY: Many of his activities are now described in three verses. Or now the word ādi (other actions) in the previous verse is explained. Kalāḥ refers to his vibhūtis or expansions and the deity of Vāmana and others. Vṛddha refers to the elders of the clan. He performed the worship with attention to the rules, with a steady mind (ātmavān). The cows were the best in qualities and behavior (sādhvīnām). First decorating brāhmaṇas with gold earrings, he would then donate cows to them. One badva is 210,757,072. Daily he would give this many cows. This was his nitya-karma or daily duty (dine dine). Badvam is repeated to emphasize the fact that he gave this amount daily or to indicate that he gave more than a badva.

Text 70.10

go-vipra-devatā-vṛddha-gurūn bhūtāni sarvaśaḥ
namaskṛtyātma-sambhūtīr maṅgalāni samaspṛśat

Kṛṣṇa would offer obeisances to the cows, brāhmaṇas and devatās, his elders and respected masters, and all living beings—all of whom are his expansions. Then he would touch auspicious things.

COMMENTARY: The cows were brought there so that he could offer respects. The brāhmaṇas came there to give blessings. Gurūn refers to Vasudeva and

others. He met them on the streets near their houses. He offered respects to all beings in his mind. He offered respects because they were his expansions. He did this in order that others would also respect them (ātma-sambhūtīḥ). Or he offered respects as part of his human pastimes.

Text 70.11

ātmānaṁ bhūṣayām āsa nara-loka-vibhūṣaṇam
vāsobhir bhūṣaṇaiḥ svīyair divya-srag-anulepanaiḥ

He would decorate his body, the very ornament of human society, with his own special clothes and jewelry and with unfading flower garlands and ointments.

COMMENTARY: He was the special ornament of all the jīvas (nara-loka-vibhūṣaṇam). He wore many cloths as was befitting royalty. But everything —clothes, ornaments and unguents—were part of himself, eternally perfect (svīyaiḥ). The garlands would not fade (divya), what to speak of withering.

Text 70.12

avekṣyājyaṁ tathādarśaṁ go-vṛṣa-dvija-devatāḥ
kāmāṁś ca sarva-varṇānāṁ paurāntaḥ-pura-cāriṇām
pradāpya prakṛtīḥ kāmaiḥ pratoṣya pratyanandata

He would then look at ghee, a mirror, the cows and bulls, the brāhmaṇas and the devatās and see to it that the members of all varṇas living in the palace and throughout the city were satisfied with gifts. After this he would satisfy ministers by fulfilling all their desires. By this he became pleased.

COMMENTARY: Go-vṛṣa refers to untrained bulls or the best of the cows. He would look at the best of cows, brāhmaṇas, and the family deity (devatāḥ). First he would worship them. He had full opportunity to see them at that time, but again he would look at them since that was auspicious. He gave orders to give them gifts and then satisfied ministers. By this he became pleased (pratyanandata).

Text 70.13

saṁvibhajyāgrato viprān srak-tāmbūlānulepanaiḥ
suhṛdaḥ prakṛtīr dārān upāyuṅkta tataḥ svayam

After first distributing flower garlands, betel and sandalwood paste to the brāhmaṇas, he would give these gifts to his friends, ministers and wives, and finally he would partake of them himself.

COMMENTARY: Afterwards (tataḥ), he would enjoy last, since that was the decorum for the householder.

Text 70.14

tāvat sūta upānīya syandanaṁ paramādbhutam
sugrīvādyair hayair yuktaṁ praṇamyāvasthito 'grataḥ

By then the Lord's driver would have brought his supremely wonderful chariot, yoked with Sugrīva and his other horses. His charioteer would bow down to the Lord and then stand before the city gate.

COMMENTARY: After discharging the brāhmaṇas and others, he would go out in his chariot. The charioteer would remain in front (agrataḥ) of the gopuram (gate) which was at the end of all the roads leading from the palace.

Text 70.15

gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇī sārathes tam athāruhat
sātyaky-uddhava-saṁyuktaḥ pūrvādrim iva bhāskaraḥ

Holding on to his charioteer's hands, Kṛṣṇa would mount the chariot, together with Sātyaki and Uddhava, just like the sun rising over the easternmost mountain.

COMMENTARY: The chariot was huge like a mountain. The Lord was shining like the sun because of his ornaments. The example indicates the magnificence of the chariot.

Text 70.16

īkṣito 'ntaḥ-pura-strīṇāṁ sa-vrīḍa-prema-vīkṣitaiḥ
kṛcchrād visṛṣṭo niragāj jāta-hāso haran manaḥ

The palace women would look upon Kṛṣṇa with shy, loving glances, and thus he would get free from them only with difficulty. He would then set off, his smiling face captivating their minds.

COMMENTARY: His verse shows the situation before he mounted the chariot. This verse describes the prema of the women who were holding articles for the auspiciousness of the journey inside and outside the palace. They held the articles for Kṛṣṇa, the object of auspiciousness in performing daily duties, who came out alone, after all the people who had come from outside the city had left. The palace women glanced at him with prema, trying to stop him from leaving with their glances. Then, by slightly lowering their glances they would allow him to depart (visṛṣṭaḥ). After that, he would smile, signifying, "O woman, your intelligence has been covered by prema. Why do you tremble? I will come for a meal at noon." He desired to pacify them with his smile.

Text 70.17

sudharmākhyāṁ sabhāṁ sarvair vṛṣṇibhiḥ parivāritaḥ
prāviśad yan-niviṣṭānāṁ na santy aṅga ṣaḍ ūrmayaḥ

The Lord, attended by all the Vṛṣṇis, would enter the Sudharmā assembly hall, which protects those who enter it from the six waves of material life, dear King.

COMMENTARY: No one would enter the assembly hall if Kṛṣṇa did not enter. He entered with music and songs (pra-aviśat). Though the hall was great from having been situated in Svarga, it was even greater because it was now in Kṛṣṇa's city. Thus, those who entered were not affected by material suffering.

Text 70.18

tatropavistaḥ paramāsane vibhur
babhau sva-bhāsā kakubho 'vabhāsayan
vṛto nṛ-siṁhair yadubhir yadūttamo
yathoḍu-rājo divi tārakā-gaṇaiḥ

As the almighty Supreme Lord would seat himself upon his exalted throne there in the assembly hall, he shone with his unique effulgence,

illuminating all the quarters of space. Surrounded by the Yadus, lions among men, that best of the Yadus appeared like the moon amidst many stars.

COMMENTARY: There, sitting on the most excellent throne, he shone because of his most excellent form, among his people who had been given similar forms. His throne also shone as the best among all the thrones including those of Ugrasena and others, even though these had been made most excellent. And he, as the supreme (vibhuḥ), shone in the Sudharmā hall, the best hall, endowed with the qualities of all best halls. He shone by his own effulgence and illuminated all directions completely. He shone surrounded by the Yādavas since they, as his associates, were the best of all men, and since he was the best of the Yadus, displaying his special powers among the best of similar people. Thus the example of the moon and stars is apt.

Text 70.19

tatropamantriṇo rājan nānā-hāsya-rasair vibhum
upatasthur naṭācāryā nartakyas tāṇḍavaiḥ pṛthak

And there, O King, jesters would entertain the Lord by displaying various comic moods, expert entertainers would perform for him, and female dancers would dance energetically.

COMMENTARY: Jesters entertained the Lord, full of all rasas (vibhum). Śukadeva addresses Parīkṣit in joy, "O King!" The performers served him by dancing.

Text 70.20

mṛdaṅga-vīṇā-muraja-veṇu-tāla-dara-svanaiḥ
nanṛtur jagus tuṣṭuvuś ca sūta-māgadha-vandinaḥ

These performers would dance and sing to the sounds of mṛdaṅgas, vīṇās, murajas, flutes, cymbals and conchs, while professional poets, chroniclers and panegyrists would recite the Lord's glories.

COMMENTARY: The singing and dancing of the bards was more exceptional than the previous singing and dancing.

Text 70.21

tatrāhur brāhmaṇāḥ kecid āsīnā brahma-vādinaḥ
pūrveṣāṁ puṇya-yaśasāṁ rājñāṁ cākathayan kathāḥ

Some brāhmaṇas sitting in that assembly hall would fluently chant Vedic mantras, while other persons recounted stories of past kings of pious renown.

COMMENTARY: Brāhmaṇas who knew the meaning of the Vedas chanted the Vedas. Other persons recited stories from the itihāsas and Purāṇas.

Text 70.22

tatraikaḥ puruṣo rājann āgato 'pūrva-darśanaḥ
vijñāpito bhagavate pratīhāraiḥ praveśitaḥ

Once a certain person arrived in the assembly, O King, who had never been seen there before. The doorkeepers announced him to the Lord and then escorted him inside.

COMMENTARY: A person they had never seen before (apūrva-darśanaḥ) arrived. The door keepers announced him and brought him in.

Text 70.23

sa namaskṛtya kṛṣṇāya pareśāya kṛtāñjaliḥ
rājñām āvedayad duḥkhaṁ jarāsandha-nirodha-jam

That person bowed down to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, and with joined palms he described to the Lord how a number of kings were suffering because Jarāsandha had imprisoned them.

COMMENTARY: The messenger saw Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord. He described the suffering of kings to Kṛṣṇa after offering respects. Or he spoke with sorrowful words about the kings.

Text 70.24

ye ca dig-vijaye tasya sannatiṁ na yayur nṛpāḥ
prasahya ruddhās tenāsann ayute dve girivraje

Twenty thousand kings who had refused to submit absolutely to Jarāsandha during his world conquest had been forcibly imprisoned by

him in the fortress named Girivraja.

COMMENTARY: The kings are described. They did not become very submissive (sannatim) to him and were thus imprisoned by Jarāsandha. The reason is described by the Lord to Yudhiṣṭhira:

sa hi rājā jarāsandho yiyakṣur vasudhādhipaih
mahādevaṁ mahātmānam umāpatim arindama

Jarāsandha wanted to perform a sacrifice to Śiva, using all the kings. Mahābhārata

Text 70.25

rājāna ūcuḥ
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇāprameyātman prapanna-bhaya-bhañjana
vayaṁ tvāṁ śaraṇaṁ yāmo bhava-bhītāḥ pṛthag-dhiyaḥ

The kings said [as related through their messenger]: O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, O immeasurable Soul, destroyer of fear for those surrendered to you! Despite our separatist attitude, we have come to you for shelter out of fear of material existence.

COMMENTARY: The words of the kings are in six verses (25-30). O Svayam Bhagavān (kṛṣṇa)! Repetition of his name indicates their miserable condition. Because you are Svayam Bhagavān, you have unsurpassable powers (aprameyātman). Because you are supreme, we surrender to you since we fear saṁsāra. You can deliver us. Why are we afraid? Our intelligence is separated from you: we are devoid of bhakti.

Text 70.26

loko vikarma-nirataḥ kuśale pramattaḥ
karmaṇy ayaṁ tvad-udite bhavad-arcane sve
yas tāvad asya balavān iha jīvitāśāṁ
sadyaś chinatty animiṣāya namo 'stu tasmai

People in this world are always engaged in sinful activities and are thus bewildered about their real duty, which is to worship you according to your commandments. This activity would truly bring them good fortune. Let us offer our obeisances unto the all-powerful Lord, who is diligent and suddenly cuts down one's stubborn hope for a long life in this world.

COMMENTARY: “Why have you not worshipped me all this time? Why have you changed your minds now?” People like us are absorbed in sinful activities. That which is beneficial for us (kuśale) is that which gives all beneficial things and destroys all detrimental things. We have not been attentive to our dharma according to varṇa (sve karmaṇi) and have not been attentive to worshipping you, which is superior to other dharmas spoken by you and definitely superior to dharmas spoken by others.

The Lord personally says:

sarva-guhyatamaṁ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ
iṣṭo ’si me dṛḍham iti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam

Again, hear from me the highest words, the supreme secret. Since you are very dear to me, I will speak for your benefit.

man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi satyaṁ te pratijāne priyo ’si me

As a devotee, offer your mind to me. Offer articles to me in worship. Offer respects to me. I promise that you will come to me without doubt, for you are most dear to me. BG 64-65

It is not possible for us to give up this strong desire which blinds us to what is auspicious for us, and which engages us in opposite actions, making us reject surrender to you. You who are strong can cut this desire. We offer respects to he who is unblinking. He is unlike us who are inattentive (pramattaḥ), distracted by our strong desires. Because of fear, we are now eager to worship you.

martyo mṛtyu-vyāla-bhītaḥ palāyan
lokān sarvān nirbhayaṁ nādhyagacchat
tvat pādābjaṁ prāpya yadṛcchayādya
susthaḥ śete mṛtyur asmād apaiti

No one in this material world, fearful of the snake of time, has become free from fear, even by fleeing to various planets. But now that you have appeared, death is fleeing in fear of you, and the living entities, having obtained shelter at your lotus feet by your mercy, are fearless and tranquil. SB 10.3.27

Text 70.27

loke bhavāñ jagad-inaḥ kalayāvatīrṇaḥ
sad-rakṣaṇāya khala-nigrahaṇāya cānyaḥ
kaścit tvadīyam atiyāti nideśam īśa
kiṁ vā janaḥ sva-kṛtam ṛcchati tan na vidmaḥ

You are the predominating Lord of the universe and have descended into this world with your personal power to protect the saintly and suppress the wicked. We cannot understand, O Lord, how anyone can transgress your law and still continue to enjoy the fruits of his work.

COMMENTARY: You are directly the Lord of the universe (jagad-inaḥ) and have appeared with your expansion Baladeva in this world. By what cause can others, the wicked who have not been suppressed, disregard your laws? O Lord, even Jarāsandha is under your control. He is under the control of karma. We do not know how anyone can surpass your law.

Text 70.28

svapnāyitaṁ nṛpa-sukhaṁ para-tantram īśa
śaśvad-bhayena mṛtakena dhuraṁ vahāmaḥ
hitvā tad ātmani sukhaṁ tvad-anīha-labhyaṁ
kliśyāmahe ’ti-kṛpaṇās tava māyayeha

O Lord, with this corpselike body, always full of fear, we bear the burden of the relative happiness of kings, which is just like a dream and dependent on others. Thus we have rejected the real happiness of the soul, which is obtained by your devotees. Being so very wretched, we simply suffer in this life under the spell of your illusory energy.

COMMENTARY: Even today we have not completely given up māyā. Having lost our intelligence (ati-kṛpaṇāḥ) by your māyā, we suffer, because we carry the burden of this body which is like an unconscious corpse. Not only do we suffer by carrying this corpse, but we suffer by the constant fear of sickness and time, which are like ghosts and spirits haunting us. “Why do you carry this burden?” It gives the happiness of a king. We do not reject that burden even now because we want to attain the position of a king. This is to be condemned. And this happiness is not real since it is like a dream, not substantial. And it is filled with misery. Having a kingdom is

dependent on many factors. That would be alright if there was no other great happiness that could be attained. We have given up the highest happiness which is testified in all the scriptures. This happiness is not dependent on other things since it manifests on its own within the ātmā. It can be attained from you by your devotees.

Text 70.29

tan no bhavān praṇata-śoka-harāṅghri-yugmo
baddhān viyuṅkṣva magadhāhvaya-karma-pāśāt
yo bhū-bhujo ʼyuta-mataṅgaja-vīryam eko
bibhrad rurodha bhavane mṛga-rāḍ ivāvīḥ

Therefore, since your feet relieve the sorrow of those who surrender to them, please release us prisoners from the shackles of karma, manifest as the King of Magadha. Wielding alone the prowess of ten thousand maddened elephants, he has locked us up in his house just as a lion captures sheep.

COMMENTARY: Since we foolish persons are not free of desires, please free us from this bondage, an obstacle to having you manifest yourself, so that we can achieve the happiness in the ātmā. Seeing that we have lost our intelligence because of your māyā (tat), please free us from prison, since your feet can destroy suffering of those who surrender to you. Bhavān can also be taken as abhavān: those who do not have auspiciousness, who are suffering greatly. Free us from the bondage of karma in the form of Jarāsandha. If it were not for our karma, he would not have the power to lock us up.

Text 70.30

yo vai tvayā dvi-nava-kṛtva udātta-cakra
bhagno mṛdhe khalu bhavantam ananta-vīryam
jitvā nṛ-loka-niratamʾ sakṛd ūḍha-darpo
yuṣmat-prajā rujati no ʼjita tad vidhehi

O wielder of the cakra! Your strength is unlimited, and thus seventeen times you crushed Jarāsandha in battle. But then, absorbed in human affairs, you allowed him to defeat you once. Now he is so filled with pride

that he dares to torment us, your subjects. O unconquerable one, please rectify this situation.

COMMENTARY: Just by holding up your cakra you can defeat him! Absorbed in your human pastimes, you allowed him to defeat you once.

Text 70.31

dūta uvāca
iti māgadha-saṁruddhā bhavad-darśana-kaṅkṣiṇaḥ
prapannāḥ pāda-mūlaṁ te dīnānāṁ śaṁ vidhīyatām

The messenger continued: This is the message of the kings imprisoned by Jarāsandha, who all hanker for your audience, having surrendered to your feet. Please bestow good fortune on these poor souls.

COMMENTARY: After revealing their suffering through their message, the messenger concluded. The kings are suffering greatly and are surrendered to you. Because they are imprisoned in Girivraja, like children, they hanker to see you. Not only should you free them. You should also show yourself to them. Therefore you should bestow good fortune on these suffering kings at this time.

Text 70.32

śrī-śuka uvāca
rāja-dūte bruvaty evaṁ devarṣiḥ parama-dyutiḥ
bibhrat piṅga-jaṭā-bhāraṁ prādurāsīd yathā raviḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When the kings' messenger had thus spoken, the sage of the devatās, Nārada, suddenly appeared. Bearing a mass of golden matted locks on his head, the supremely effulgent sage entered like the brilliant sun.

COMMENTARY: At this time he was manifesting more effulgence that ever (parama-dyutiḥ). This was arranged by the Lord so that people would listen to his words.

Text 70.33

taṁ dṛṣṭvā bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ sarva-lokeśvareśvaraḥ
vavanda utthitaḥ śīrṣṇā sa-sabhyaḥ sānugo mudā

Kṛṣṇa is the worshipable master of even planetary rulers like Brahmā and Śiva, yet as soon as he saw that Nārada had arrived, he joyfully stood up along with his priest and ministers and retinue to receive the great sage and offer his respectful obeisances by bowing his head.

COMMENTARY: Though he was the Lord of controllers of the planets like Brahmā, in joy he rose from his seat. He offered respects with his head since he always revealed qualities like respecting brāhmaṇas and having an unlimited good reputation (bhagavān). Sa-sabhyaḥ refers to priests and others. His retinue consisted of persons like Uddhava.

Text 70.34

sabhājayitvā vidhi-vat kṛtāsana-parigraham
babhāṣe sunṛtair vākyaiḥ śraddhayā tarpayan munim

After Nārada had accepted the seat offered to him, Kṛṣṇa honored the sage according to scriptural injunctions and, gratifying him with his affection, spoke the following truthful and pleasing words.

COMMENTARY: He worshipped him according to the rules, staring with welcome (svāgatam) and ending with nirājana (āratrika). He spoke affectionately (śraddhayā) with truthful words. Or he satisfied him with his faith since he was most worthy of worship (munim). Or, he satisfied the sage who was silent (munim) because of great surprise that Kṛṣṇa worshipped him in this way.

Text 70.35

api svid adya lokānāṁ trayāṇām akuto-bhayam
nanu bhūyān bhagavato lokān paryaṭato guṇaḥ

[Kṛṣṇa said:] It is certain that today the three worlds have attained freedom from all fear, for that is the influence of such a great personality as you, who travel at will throughout all the worlds.

COMMENTARY: Api svit indicates a question. Everyone in the universe is free of fear. You wander about to benefit us since you are the Lord (īśvara-kartṛṣu). This is stated in the next verse. Nanu indicates conjecture or certainty. He calls Nārada bhagavān out of great respect. This quality of fearlessness should arise from you who wander throughout the universe.

Or, “How do I know about this?” Your influence (guṇaḥ) is everywhere since you wander in all places.

Text 70.36

na hi te ’viditaṁ kiñcil lokeṣv īśvara-kartṛṣu
atha pṛcchāma he yuṣmān pāṇḍavānāṁ cikīrṣitam

There is nothing unknown to you within God’s creation. Therefore please tell us what the Pāṇḍavas intend to do.

COMMENTARY: “What is this?” Nothing is unknown to you in all the planets created by the Lord. Kṛṣṇa makes this statement because he acts as a human in his pastimes. For this reason (atha) I ask you about the activities of the Pāṇḍavas. The word he means “O person most worthy of worship!” This indicates Kṛṣṇa’s personal interest in the Pāṇḍavas among everything in creation.

Text 70.37

śrī-nārada uvāca
dṛṣṭā māyā te bahuśo duratyayā
māyā vibho viśva-sṛjaś ca māyinaḥ
bhūteṣu bhūmaṁś carataḥ sva-śaktibhir
vahner iva cchanna-ruco na me ’dbhutam

Śrī Nārada said: I have seen many times the insurmountable power of your māyā-- the creators of the universes and the possessors of māyā, O almighty one. O all-encompassing Lord, it does not surprise me that you disguise yourself by your own energies while moving among the created beings, as a fire covers its own light with smoke.

COMMENTARY: Nārada does not answer the proposition of the Lord that Nārada has made the three worlds fearless and in response to the Lord’s statement that Nārada sees everything, he accepts that he has seen everything represented by the śaktis of the Lord. I have seen the effects of māyā—the various universes, the creators within them such as Brahmā and Viṣṇu, and the possessors of the māyā-śakti (māyinaḥ). It does not surprise me that you wander among the living beings hidden like all-pervading fire, by your śaktis or your śakti filled with bhakti. Vyāsa has stated:

tvaṁ paryaṭann arka iva tri-lokīm
antaś-caro vāyur ivātma-sākṣī

You wander like the sun throughout the three worlds seeing everything and wander like the life air throughout the body as the witness of everyone's intelligence. SB 1.5.7

Text 70.38

tavehitaṁ ko 'rhati sādhu vedituṁ
sva-māyayedaṁ sṛjato niyacchataḥ
yad vidyamānātmatayāvabhāsate
tasmai namas te sva-vilakṣaṇātmane

Who can properly understand your purpose since you expand and control this whole creation by your māyā. I offer respects to you, who manifests this universe in its present form, and are completely different from me.

COMMENTARY: Though you desired to say that I have all knowledge by your question, what person like me, or even a great soul, can really understand your activities, since you either directly or indirectly create and control this whole universe, which was the topic of your question. Therefore I offer respects only to you, who manifest this universe in its present form—like a crystal marble shining in the palm of your hand. You should not deny this statement, since you are completely different from me (sva-vilakṣaṇātmane).

Text 70.39

jīvasya yaḥ saṁsarato vimokṣaṇaṁ
na jānato 'nartha-vahāc charīrataḥ
līlāvatāraiḥ sva-yaśaḥ pradīpakaṁ
prājvālayat tvā tam ahaṁ prapadye

Therefore I surrender unto you, who light the lamp of your fame though various the pastimes of various avatāras for the benefit of the jīvas who do not know the method of becoming free from saṁsāra and the material body, which brings them grief.

COMMENTARY: Let your activities be! I surrender to you who, out of great mercy, light the lamp of your fame, which reveals everything for the jīva

who does not know the method of his liberation from saṁsāra and the body. Since I am bewildered by your manifestations of ignorance, I surrender to you.

Text 70.40

athāpy āśrāvaye brahma nara-loka-viḍambanam
rājñaḥ paitṛ-ṣvasreyasya bhaktasya ca cikīrṣitam

Nonetheless, O Supreme Truth playing the part of a human being, I shall tell you what your devotee Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, the son of your father's sister, intends to do.

COMMENTARY: Though you are omniscient, I will tell you everything (ā-śrāvaye) since you are playing as a human being. Your question is suitable since Yudhiṣṭhira is the son of Kuntī who has great affection for you. He is also your great devotee.

Text 70.41

yakṣyati tvāṁ makhendreṇa rājasūyena pāṇḍavaḥ
pārameṣṭhya-kāmo nṛpatis tad bhavān anumodatām

Desiring unrivaled sovereignty, Yudhiṣṭhira intends to worship you with the greatest fire sacrifice, the Rājasūya. Please bless his endeavor.

COMMENTARY: Desiring the wealth befitting you, Yudhiṣṭhira desires to serve you, who always come to his house, by the rājasūya sacrifice, the best of all sacrifices, which brings under control all kings and devatās. All that wealth is nothing for him, without you.

kiṁ te kāmāḥ sura-spārhā mukunda-manaso dvijāḥ
adhijahrur mudaṁ rājñaḥ kṣudhitasya yathetare

Did these things give joy to the King, whose mind was only fixed on Mukunda without deviation and nothing else? SB 1.12.6

āsīnaḥ kāñcane sākṣād āsane maghavān iva
pārameṣṭhya-śrīyā juṣṭaḥ stūyamānaś ca vandibhiḥ

Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, was sitting just like Indra on a golden throne in the assembly hall built by Maya Dānava. Displaying the majesty

of Brahmā himself, King Yudhiṣṭhira was being praised by the court poets. SB 10.75.35

Text 70.42

tasmin deva kratu-vare bhavantaṁ vai surādayaḥ
didṛkṣavaḥ sameṣyanti rājānaś ca yaśasvinaḥ

O Lord, exalted devatās and virtuous kings, eager to see you, will all come to that best of sacrifices.

COMMENTARY: Yaśasvinaḥ means "having good conduct."

Text 70.43

śravaṇāt kīrtanād dhyānāt pūyante ʼnte-vasāyinaḥ
tava brahma-mayasyeśa kim utekṣābhimarśinaḥ

O Lord, even outcastes are purified by hearing and chanting your glories and meditating upon you, the Absolute Truth. What then to speak of those who see and touch you?

COMMENTARY: Those who are outcastes are purified of the fault of their birth by hearing, chanting and meditating. What to speak of those who see and touch you? Or, what to speak of those who experience you by seeing you?

Text 70.44

yasyāmalaṁ divi yaśaḥ prathitaṁ rasāyāṁ
bhūmau ca te bhuvana-maṅgala dig-vitānam
mandākinīti divi bhogavatīti cādho
gaṅgeti ceha caraṇāmbu punāti viśvam

Your purifying, most excellent fame is known throughout the universe, including the higher, middle and lower planetary systems. The water that washes your lotus feet, known in the higher planetary systems as the Mandākinī River, in the lower planetary systems as the Bhogavatī and in this earthly planetary system as the Gaṅgā, purifies the entire universe.

COMMENTARY: Having described the glories of hearing and chanting, Nārada describes a unique feature of hearing the Lord's glories. Your glories, which destroy all contamination in the hearers (amalam yaśaḥ),

which are auspicious for the universe, and which are supreme because of creating the greatest auspiciousness (vitānam), are famous everywhere (prathitam) since you have the most pure reputation. Oh! The water from your feet purifies the universe in the form of Mandākinī, Bhogavatī and Gaṅgā. This is astonishing since normally foot water is discarded in a distance place because it is impure.

Text 70.45

śrī-śuka uvāca
tatra teṣv ātma-pakṣeṣv a-gṛṇatsu vijigīṣayā
vācaḥ peśaiḥ smayan bhṛtyam uddhavaṁ prāha keśavaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When his supporters, the Yādavas, objected to this proposal (by silence) out of eagerness to defeat Jarāsandha, Keśava turned to his servant Uddhava and, smiling, addressed him with fine words.

COMMENTARY: The Yādavas were silent. This was a sign that they did not agree to the proposal. Another version has gṛṇatsu instead of agṛṇatsu. Kṛṣṇa (keśavaḥ) turned to Uddhava in order to spread Uddhava's glories, since he killed Keśī out of affection for the people of Gokula. In Dvārakā he had a special affection for Uddhava. He spoke to Uddhava deliberately (prāha), using fine words since Uddhava was the form of joy (uddhavam) for all people. He smiled because of his special intentions which Uddhava knew.

Text 70.46

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
tvaṁ hi naḥ paramaṁ cakṣuḥ suhṛn mantrārtha-tattva-vit
athātra brūhy anuṣṭheyaṁ śraddadhmaḥ karavāma tat

The Lord said: You are indeed our best eye and closest friend, for you know perfectly the relative value of various kinds of counsel. Therefore please tell us what should be done in this situation. We trust your judgment and shall do as you say.

COMMENTARY: You alone (hi) are the eye of the Yādavas since you act for our benefit without personal motives (suhṛt) and know thoroughly how to

give counsel. You are the best eye. More than the eye, you have the ability to see the future and distant places by mantra. For this reason, you should say which of these two actions should be done first. You should not say that your words will not be done. We will accept your decision with faith and carry it out. With great affection he encouraged Uddhava to speak.

Text 70.47

ity upāmantrito bhartrā sarva-jñenāpi mugdha-vat
nideśaṁ śirasādhāya uddhavaḥ pratyabhāṣata

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus requested by his master, who, though omniscient, acted as if perplexed, Uddhava took this order upon his head and replied as follows.

COMMENTARY: Being instructed with affection (upāmantritaḥ) by his master, whose order he must necessarily obey, with devotion he took the order on his head. This means he joined his hands and placed them on his head.

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[1] This is probably ātma-buddhi-prakāśam from Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad.

Chapter Seventy-one
Lord Kṛṣṇa Travels to Indraprastha

Text 71.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
ity udīritam ākarṇya devaṛṣer uddhavo 'bravīt
sabhyānāṁ matam ājñāya kṛṣṇasya ca mahā-matiḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus heard the statements of Kṛṣṇa, and understanding the opinions of both the assembly and Nārada, the great-minded Uddhava began to speak.

COMMENTARY: Having heard what Kṛṣṇa said and understanding completely (ā-jñāya) the opinion of Nārada and the assembly, Uddhava spoke. He is called mahā-matiḥ of out joy because as Kṛṣṇa's favorite devotee, he would bring a solution that would maintain everyone's propositions.

Text 71.2

śrī-uddhava uvāca
yad uktam ṛṣinā deva sācivyaṁ yakṣyatas tvayā
kāryaṁ paitṛ-ṣvasreyasya rakṣā ca śaraṇaiṣiṇām

Śrī Uddhava said: O Lord, as the sage advised, you should help your cousin fulfill his plan for performing the Rājasūya sacrifice, and you should also protect the kings who are begging for your shelter.

COMMENTARY: You should assist what was explained by Nārada because it is your cousin who wants to do a sacrifice, and since you act in a brilliant manner (deva). Or you are engaged in pastimes. You have to follow his words since he is a sage (ṛṣiṇā).

Text 71.3

yaṣṭavyam rājasūyena dik-cakra-jayinā vibho
ato jarā-suta-jaya ubhayārtho mato mama

Only one who has conquered all opponents in every direction can perform the Rājasūya sacrifice, O almighty one. Thus, in my opinion,

conquering Jarāsandha will serve both purposes.

COMMENTARY: "But you should first go to save the kings since they have first petitioned you and are about to die. The sacrifice can be done later." One who has conquered everywhere can perform the rājasūya sacrifice. Thus defeating Jarāsandha with the desire to perform the sacrifice will serve both purposes. "It will be difficult to conquer him." It will be easy since you have power (vibho). The name Jarā-suta (son of Jarā) indicates that he remembered how Jarāsandha was joined together by Jarā, and could be killed by pulling him apart. Therefore for the sacrifice, first go and kill Jarāsandha.

Text 71.4

asmākaṁ ca mahān artho hy etenaiva bhaviṣyati
yaśaś ca tava govinda rājño baddhān vimuñcataḥ

By this decision there will be a great gain for us, and you will save the kings. Thus, Govinda, you will be glorified.

COMMENTARY: Not only will this be beneficial for the kings and the Pāṇḍavas, but for us as well. By defeating him we will gain, since our powerful enemy will have died. Freeing the kings, you will gain fame. That is also our gain. Looking at the Yādavas, he made them favor his suggestion. Bandhāt is sometimes seen instead of baddhān. This is proper for you who have appeared on earth (govinda) to reveal yourself as Bhagavān.

Text 71.5

sa vai durviṣaho rāja nāgāyuta-samo bale
balinām api cānyeṣāṁ bhīmaṁ sama-balaṁ vinā

The invincible Jarāsandha is as strong as ten thousand elephants. Other powerful warriors cannot defeat him. Only Bhīma is equal to him in strength.

COMMENTARY: "Why can the Pāṇḍavas not kill Jarāsandha?" Three verses (5-7) explain. It is well known (vai). He is equal to ten thousand elephants in strength and cannot be conquered by other powerful warriors.

He also has a huge army (rājaḥ).

Text 71.6

dvai-rathe sa tu jetavyo mā śatākṣauhiṇī-yutaḥ
brāhmaṇyo ’bhyarthito viprair na pratyākhyāti karhicit

He will be defeated in a single combat, not when he is with his hundred military divisions. Now, Jarāsandha is so devoted to the brahminical culture that he never refuses requests from brāhmaṇas.

COMMENTARY: He can be conquered in single combat, not when he is with his hundred akṣauhiṇīs, for otherwise he will kill the kings and destroy the wealth meant for the sacrifice. Uddhava explains the first step. He hates you and the devotees, but he is devoted to brāhmaṇas. Being in tamas he will agree since he has a desire for fame. If you ask for single combat going as you are, he will refuse, but if you ask him when disguised as a brāhmaṇa he will not refuse. He will accept.

Text 71.7

brahma-veṣa-dharo gatvā taṁ bhikṣeta vṛkodaraḥ
haniṣyati na sandeho dvai-rathe tava sannidhau

Bhīma should go to him disguised as a brāhmaṇa and beg charity. Thus he will obtain single combat with Jarāsandha, and in your presence Bhīma will no doubt kill him.

COMMENTARY: Therefore Bhīma, with a thin waist, should dress up as brāhmaṇa. He is strong, being similar to the strong lion with a thin waist. Not only will he defeat him, but he will kill him.

Text 71.8

nimittaṁ param īśasya viśva-sarga-nirodhayoḥ
hiraṇyagarbhaḥ śarvaś ca kālasyārūpiṇas tava

Even Brahmā and Śiva act only as your instruments in cosmic creation and annihilation, which are ultimately done by you, the Supreme Lord, in your invisible aspect of time.

COMMENTARY: Your form as time is the instrument for creation and destruction. It is without form. Though it does everything, its actions are unseen. Such power is proper since it belongs to you, the Lord (īśasya). Just

as you perform the actions of creation and destruction invisibly to give fame to Brahmā and Śiva, so you should arrange this invisibly to give fame to Bhīma.

Text 71.9

gāyanti te viśada-karma gṛheṣu devyo
rājñāṁ sva-śatru-vadham ātma-vimokṣaṇaṁ ca
gopyaś ca kuñjara-pater janakātmajāyāḥ
pitroś ca labdha-śaraṇā munayo vayaṁ ca

In their homes, the godly wives of the imprisoned kings sing of your noble deeds—about how you will kill their husbands' enemy and deliver them. The gopīs also sing your glories—how you killed Śaṅkhacūḍa and delivered them from his hands. The surrendered souls sing of your killing the enemy of Gajendra. The sages sing of your killing the enemy of Sītā. We Yadus sing of your killing the enemies of Vasudeva and Devakī.

COMMENTARY: You destroy the suffering of persons who surrender only to you, whose only hope in life is you.

All the devotees sing at all times about your spotless activities concerned with killing the sinful and protecting the righteous. Understand the present situation. The wives of the kings, situated in their homes, feeling humble before you, offer prayers while singing of freedom for their husbands from the enemy and their own release from being separated from the Lord. Giving a general prayer of liberation for their husbands, they announce their own desire of freedom from separation, displaying the gopīs' mood secretly.

Suppressing hopes of destroying the enemy named "separation from Kṛṣṇa", the gopīs instead sing of the killing of Śaṅkhacūḍa, and then their own liberation from that demon—even though the event has long passed. The protection of the husbands is reinforced by the other examples. We sing of these two subjects (killing demons and protecting ourselves) in relation to different devotees in your different births in this world. We will sing whenever the queens and the gopīs reveal their desires for having demons killed and being protected by you. Like the queens, the gopīs' desires should be fulfilled. Similarly the surrendered souls sing of your

killing the enemy of Gajendra and saving him, the sages sing of your killing the enemy of Sītā and saving her, and we Yadus sing of your killing the enemies of Vasudeva and Devakī and saving them. We do not sing of freeing the gopīs, since their desires for you have not been fulfilled. This indicates Uddhava's increasing anxiety for the gopīs.

Though liberated persons are situated beyond this world—parinișțhito 'pi nairguṇya (SB 2.1.9), they surrender because of the Lord's glories and become devotees. The Pāṇḍavas are included. Therefore everyone who takes shelter of you should be protected. That is the conclusion.

The gopīs should be listed at the end, being the highest with the most intimate relationship, but they are mentioned in the middle because they are women and because of the great fervor generated by remembering them. Uddhava suddenly mentioned the gopīs with this intention. Starting from leaving Vraja, but not getting opportunities, on some pretext, he wanted Kṛṣṇa to remember them. Thus he scolds Kṛṣṇa by saying, "You are advised by me to protect everyone. Why do you not remember the gopīs?" It will be explained later that the Lord decided in his mind, "I will go to Vraja after the Rājasūya sacrifice is completed and I kill Dantavakra." It should not be considered a fault that Uddhava mentioned the gopīs in the assembly of the Yādavas, since he indicates gopīs in general, which included Yaśodā.

Text 71.10

jarāsandha-vadhaḥ kṛṣṇa bhūry-arthāyopakalpate
prāyaḥ pāka-vipākena tava cābhimataḥ kratuḥ

O Kṛṣṇa, the killing of Jarāsandha, which is certainly a reaction of his past sins, will bring immense benefit. It will make possible the sacrificial ceremony you desire.

COMMENTARY: Uddhava concludes in this verse. Killing Jarāsandha will be most beneficial. It will allow the rājasūya sacrifice to take place. In a sacrifice, the raw rice (pāka) is cooked (vipāka). Similarly the Pāṇḍavas will develop by having enough wealth without obstructions. Then the sacrifice can be performed. Or by the transformation (vipākena) of the sins (pāka) of Śiśupāla and Duryodhana—by their destruction—the Pāṇḍavas will be able

to hold the sacrifice. Therefore, in order to perform the sacrifice, after pacifying Yudhiṣṭhira and with his permission, have Bhīma kill Jarāsandha and free the kings. Then the sacrifice can be performed. O Kṛṣṇa, most worthy of worship, you are the supreme controller, you are the cause of all beings, and you possess all glories. Śruti says yasya nāma-mahaḍ yaśaḥ: his name is greatly glorified. (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad) Uddhava's dāsya-bhāva is not hidden in his statement.

Text 71.11

śrī-śuka uvāca
ity uddhava-vaco rājan sarvato-bhadram acyutam
devarṣir yadu-vṛddhāś ca kṛṣṇaś ca pratyapūjayan

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, Devarṣi Nārada, the Yadu elders and Kṛṣṇa all welcomed Uddhava's proposal, which was entirely auspicious and infallible.

COMMENTARY: They responded to his wise words in a similar way (pratyapūjayan). Or they worshipped him at every moment. Respecting him they praised him saying, "Very good! Very good!" Nārada is mentioned first. He agreed, since his plan would be achieved. Kṛṣṇa is mentioned at the end, for whatever Uddhava said, he was made to say by Kṛṣṇa. This was Kṛṣṇa's proposal also. The elders are mentioned because of their importance.

Text 71.12

athādiśat prayāṇāya bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ
bhṛtyān dāruka-jaitrādīn anujñāpya gurūn vibhuḥ

The almighty Lord, the son of Devakī, begged his superiors for permission to leave. Then he ordered his servants, headed by Dāruka and Jaitra, to prepare for departure.

COMMENTARY: Immediately (atha) he took permission. Out of eagerness to meet the Pāṇḍavas, he did not even wait for an auspicious muhūrta for departure. He was not lacking a particle of his full powers (bhagavān) but he was outstanding as the son of Devakī. He was Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa.

Svayam means that he was astonishing on consideration of his unrestricted powers. He was completely independent (vibhuḥ). The word ādīn refers to others like Prabala and Arhaṇa.[1]

Text 71.13

nirgamayyāvarodhān svān sa-sutān sa-paricchadān
saṅkarṣaṇam anujñāpya yadu-rājaṁ ca śatru-han
sūtopanītaṁ sva-ratham āruhad garuḍa-dhvajam

O slayer of enemies, after he had arranged for the departure of his wives, children and baggage and taken leave of Saṅkarṣaṇa and King Ugrasena, Kṛṣṇa mounted his chariot, which had been brought by his driver. It flew a flag marked with the emblem of Garuḍa.

COMMENTARY: He arranged for the travel of the members of the inner palace, his sons, grandsons, their wives and daughters, since they could not leave each other because of the strong affection, along with furnishings like palanquins, servants and retinue (paricchadān). Balarāma is called Saṅkarṣaṇa because he was the second member of the catur-vyūha. Kṛṣṇa took permission from Ugrasena, who as king should protect the city. He established respect for him by doing this. After the queens and others had departed he asked permission from Balarāma and Ugrasena, since they accompanied him for quite a distance. O slayer of enemies! This was a proper way for Kṛṣṇa to kill his enemy Jarāsandha. You know since you also kill your enemies. The uniqueness of Kṛṣṇa's chariot is described. It was decorated with Garuḍa. This suggests it would go fast and instill fear in the enemies.

Text 71.14

tato ratha-dvipa-bhaṭa-sādi-nāyakaiḥ
karālayā parivṛta ātma-senayā
mṛdaṅga-bhery-ānaka-śaṅkha-gomukhaiḥ
praghoṣa-ghoṣita-kakubho nirakramat

As the vibrations resounding from mṛdaṅgas, bherīs, kettledrums, conchs and gomukhas filled the sky in all directions, Kṛṣṇa set out on his journey. He was accompanied by the chief officers of his corps of chariots,

elephants, infantry and cavalry and surrounded on all sides by his fierce personal guards.

COMMENTARY: After this (tataḥ) or from the city (tataḥ), while the directions became filled with the sounds of instruments, he departed. He was surrounded by his own fierce troops and palanquins, etc. This, along with the devotion, indicates the extraordinary scene. Ānaka is a kettledrum. Gomukha is a type of ānaka.

Text 71.15

nṛ-vāji-kāñcana-śibikābhir acyutaṁ
sahātmajāḥ patim anu su-vratā yayuḥ
varāmbarābharaṇa-vilepana-srajaḥ
su-saṁvṛtā nṛbhir asi-carma-pāṇibhiḥ

Acyuta's faithful wives, along with their children, followed the Lord on golden palanquins carried by powerful men. The queens were adorned with fine clothing, ornaments, fragrant oils and flower garlands, and they were surrounded on all sides by soldiers carrying swords and shields in their hands.

COMMENTARY: The women were inside the palanquins but are mentioned separately in order to describe them. Kṛṣṇa was firmly situated (acyutam) in front of all of them. The women were completely (sam) surrounded by the soldiers, with no gaps, but nicely positioned at a distance (su) so they did not feel crowded. Nṛ-vāji-kāñcana-śibikābhir can also mean "with palanquins carried by men who walked quickly like horses."

Text 71.16

naroṣṭra-go-mahiṣa-kharāśvatary-anaḥ
kareṇubhiḥ parijana-vāra-yoṣitaḥ
sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ kaṭa-kuṭi-kambalāmbarādy-
upaskarā yayur adhiyujya sarvataḥ

On all sides proceeded finely adorned women—attendants of the royal household, as well as courtesans. They rode on palanquins and camels, bulls and buffalos, donkeys, mules, bullock carts and elephants. Their

conveyances were fully loaded with grass tents, blankets, clothes and other items for the trip.

COMMENTARY: Nara means palanquins carried by men. Go means bulls. Parijana means attendants like washermen. The equipment was loaded on the carts.

Text 71.17

balaṁ bṛhad-dhvaja-paṭa-chatra-cāmarair
varāyudhābharaṇa-kirīṭa-varmabhiḥ
divāṁśubhis tumula-ravaṁ babhau raver
yathārṇavaḥ kṣubhita-timiṅgilormibhiḥ

The Lord's army shone brightly in the day with royal umbrellas, cāmara fans and huge flagpoles with waving banners, fine weapons, jewelry, helmets and armor, surpassing the sun. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa's army, noisy with shouts and clatter, appeared like an ocean stirring with agitated waves and timiṅgila fish.

COMMENTARY: The army shone by its own effulgence in the day, with huge flags and the best weapons, etc. surpassing the sun. Paṭa means cloth flags. It was like the ocean with waves within which were agitated timiṅgila fish. The flags are compared to the fish and the rays of brightness are compared to the waves.

Text 71.18

atho munir yadu-patinā sabhājitaḥ
praṇamya taṁ hṛdi vidadhad vihāyasā
niśamya tad-vyavasitam āhṛtārhaṇo
mukunda-sandaraśana-nirvṛtendriyaḥ

Nārada was then honored by Kṛṣṇa, who bowed to him. All of Nārada's senses were satisfied by his meeting with Kṛṣṇa. Thus, having heard the decision of the Lord and having been worshiped by him, Nārada placed him firmly within his heart and departed through the sky.

COMMENTARY: After they had departed, Kṛṣṇa offered respects to Nārada and worshipped him. Nārada then departed through the sky. He was worshipped with many articles of worship (āhṛtārhaṇaḥ). He was also

worshipped by all the Yadus. Hearing that his desires concerning the Pāṇḍavas and the imprisoned kings were satisfied, he left, but was continually thinking of Kṛṣṇa in his heart, since his senses were blissful because of dealings with Kṛṣṇa who destroys all suffering, even by just seeing him.

Text 71.19

rāja-dūtam uvācedaṁ bhagavān prīṇayan girā
mā bhaiṣṭa dūta bhadraṁ vo ghātayiṣyāmi māgadham

With pleasing words, the Lord addressed the messenger sent by the kings: "My dear messenger, I wish all good fortune to you. I shall arrange for the killing of king of Magadha. Do not fear."

COMMENTARY: Remembering the Lord's great, fathomless mercy and maintaining his vow to deliver the surrendered, Śukadeva speaks with a choked voice. "Do not fear. I will have Jarāsandha killed through Bhīma."

Text 71.20

ity uktaḥ prasthito dūto yathā-vad avadan nṛpān
te 'pi sandarśanaṁ śaureḥ pratyaikṣan yan mumukṣavaḥ

Thus addressed, the messenger departed and accurately relayed the Lord's message to the kings. They then waited expectantly for their meeting with Kṛṣṇa, eager for freedom in order to see him.

COMMENTARY: The kings waited, depending only on Kṛṣṇa (pratyaikṣan). They developed the desire to be free from Jarāsandha in order to see Kṛṣṇa.

Text 71.21

ānarta-sauvīra-marūṁs tīrtvā vinaśanaṁ hariḥ
girīn nadīr atīyāya pura-grāma-vrajākarān

As he traveled through the provinces of Ānarta, Sauvīra, Marudeśa and Vinaśana, Kṛṣṇa crossed rivers and passed mountains, cities, villages, cow pastures and quarries.

COMMENTARY: Crossing mountains and rivers, he passed through different provinces and passed through cities, villages, cow pastures and mines.

Sauvīra and Pāñcāla were on the road he took.

Text 71.22

tato dṛṣadvatīṁ tīrtvā mukundo 'tha sarasvatīm
pañcālān atha matsyāṁś ca śakra-prastham athāgamat

After crossing the rivers Dṛṣadvatī and Sarasvatī, he passed through Pāñcāla and Matsya and finally came to Indraprastha.

COMMENTARY: After passing through those places he passed through Dṛṣadvatī. Though in going from Dvārakā to Indraprastha, Vinaśana, Pāñcāla and other provinces were not on the path, he visited those places to give happiness to the devotees there and give benefit to all living entities. Even going with minimal luggage, the pace was not fast because of the palanquins.

Text 71.23

tam upāgatam ākarṇya prīto durdarśanaṁ nṛnām
ajāta-śatrur niragāt sopadhyāyaḥ suhṛd-vṛtaḥ

King Yudhiṣṭhira was delighted to hear that the Lord, whom human beings rarely see, had now arrived. Accompanied by his priests and dear associates, the King came out to meet Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: Though Kṛṣṇa was rarely seen by living beings, he had come close (upa-āgatam). Yudhiṣṭhira had a soft, straight-forward heart (ajāta-śatruḥ). Thus his delight was natural.

Text 71.24

gīta-vāditra-ghoṣeṇa brahma-ghoṣeṇa bhūyasā
abhyayāt sa hṛṣīkeśaṁ prāṇāḥ prāṇam ivādṛtaḥ

As songs and musical instruments resounded along with the loud vibration of Vedic hymns, the king, honored by Kṛṣṇa, went forth to meet Hṛṣīkeśa, just as the senses go forth to meet the life airs.

COMMENTARY: Hṛṣīkeśa means "having hair which shone." Thus from far off, he shone because of his effulgence. Or, he controlled all the senses by prema. Ādṛtaḥ means respected or worshipped. Yudhiṣṭhira was respected by Kṛṣṇa when Kṛṣṇa came to his place and got off his chariot, etc. The

senses which become inactive without the life air, which leaves the body as when fainting, approach the life air when it returns.

Text 71.25

dṛṣṭvā viklinna-hṛdayaḥ kṛṣṇaṁ snehena pāṇḍavaḥ
cirād dṛṣṭaṁ priyatamaṁ sasvaje 'tha punaḥ punaḥ

The heart of King Yudhiṣṭhira melted with affection when he saw his dear friend, Kṛṣṇa, after such a long separation, and he embraced the Lord again and again.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa was by his nature attractive to all hearts (kṛṣṇam). But he was especially dear to Yudhiṣṭhira. Kṛṣṇa was the crest jewel among all his dear friends. And he was seeing him after a long time. Therefore, repeatedly he embraced Kṛṣṇa since he felt unsatisfied when he stopped.

Text 71.26

dorbhyāṁ pariṣvajya ramāmalālayaṁ
mukunda-gātraṁ nṛ-patir hatāśubhaḥ
lebhe parāṁ nirvṛtim aśru-locano
hṛṣyat-tanur vismṛta-loka-vibhramaḥ

The eternal form of Kṛṣṇa is the everlasting residence of the goddess of fortune. As soon as King Yudhiṣṭhira embraced him, the King became free of suffering separation and immediately felt the highest bliss. There were tears in his eyes, and his body shook due to ecstasy. He completely forgot that he was living in this material world.

COMMENTARY: In examining the good fortune of Yudhiṣṭhira and others, Śukadeva sings, using a longer meter in two verses (26-27) because of his intense prema. Yudhiṣṭhira embraced Kṛṣṇa tightly for a long time. "Embracing with the arms" is redundant, but out of bliss it expresses the oneness of the two persons. Lakṣmī does not remain personally in other abodes since those abodes are faulty and without sweetness. She stays there only in a shadow form. However, she stays with the Lord personally because he is the shelter of all good qualities and is faultless. The Lord removes all sorrow and bestows the highest bliss (mukunda). By Kṛṣṇa's embrace all his suffering from separation vanished (hatāśubhaḥ) and he

attained the highest bliss. The long separation was excellent since it ended with the highest bliss. Since he was the lord of men (nṛpatiḥ), all his followers also experienced similar feelings.

Text 71.27

taṁ mātuleyaṁ parirabhya nirvṛto
bhīmaḥ smayan prema-jalākulendriyaḥ
yamau kirīṭī ca suhṛttamaṁ mudā
pravṛddha-bāṣpāḥ parirebhire 'cyutam

Then Bhīma, his eyes brimming with tears, laughed with joy as he embraced his maternal cousin, Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna and the twins—Nakula and Sahadeva—also joyfully embraced their dear friend, the infallible Lord, and they cried profusely.

COMMENTARY: As cousins, they did not show undue reverence with each other. They were overwhelmed with affection. They embraced and felt bliss. Then their faces blossomed with smiles. All their senses were filled with prema. Then Nakula, Sahadeva and Arjuna shed even more tears out of joy than Bhīma and Yudhiṣṭhira as they embraced their best friend Acyuta. All their senses were covered with prema (prema-java instead of prema-jala). This should also be understood: out of prema Kṛṣṇa was also fixed in embracing them (acyutam). Arjuna is mentioned last because he wanted to embrace Kṛṣṇa for a long time. Or overcome with intense affection, he could not come quickly and thus arrived last.

Text 71.28

arjunena pariṣvakto yamābhyām abhivāditaḥ
brāhmaṇebhyo namaskṛtya vṛddhebhyaś ca yathārhataḥ
mānino mānayām āsa kuru-sṛñjaya-kaikayān

After Arjuna had embraced him once more and Nakula and Sahadeva had offered him their obeisances, Kṛṣṇa bowed down to the brāhmaṇas and elders present, thus properly honoring the respectable members of the Kuru, Sṛñjaya and Kaikaya clans.

COMMENTARY: First their embraces endowed with reverence, with a general description of everyone's bewilderment in joy, were described. They

observed proper behavior from their respective positions. Now the last three Pāṇḍavas' more intense emotions are described. Arjuna embraced him again. This shows his great friendship with him. Though not stated, it should be understood that before Arjuna offered respects as mentioned in this verse, Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma greeted him first though it is not mentioned. Māninaḥ means respectable persons. Kṛṣṇa offered respects in a suitable manner.

Text 71.29

sūta-māgadha-gandharvā vandinaś copamantriṇaḥ
mṛdaṅga-śaṅkha-paṭaha vīṇā-paṇava-gomukhaiḥ
brāhmaṇāś cāravindākṣaṁ tuṣṭuvur nanṛtur jaguḥ

Sūtas, Māgadhas, Gandharvas, Vandīs, orators and brāhmaṇas all glorified the lotus-eyed Lord—some reciting prayers, some dancing and singing—as mṛdaṅgas, conchs, kettledrums, vīṇās, paṇavas and gomukhas resounded.

COMMENTARY: The sūtas, the māgadhas, and the Gandharvas sang and danced using instruments. The vandīs and orators (upamanitriṇaḥ) praised the Lord. The brāhmaṇas said, "Having protected real dharma for us and others, may you live long!" Or, out of great joy, all praised and sang using instruments because, having seen him with his lotus eyes (aravindākṣam), all suffering ceased and all joy manifested.

Text 71.30

evaṁ suhṛdbhiḥ paryastaḥ puṇya-śloka-śikhāmaṇiḥ
saṁstūyamāno bhagavān viveśālaṅkṛtaṁ puram

Thus surrounded by his well-wishing relatives and praised on all sides, Kṛṣṇa, the crest jewel of the justly renowned, entered the decorated city.

COMMENTARY: Surrounded by friends, Kṛṣṇa was praised profusely because he was famous for his attractiveness (puṇya) or for being dharma incarnate (puṇya) for the Pāṇḍavas, and was full of all attractiveness (bhagavān).

Text 71.31–32

saṁsikta-vartma kariṇāṁ mada-gandha-toyaiś
citra-dhvajaiḥ kanaka-toraṇa-pūrṇa-kumbhaiḥ
mṛṣṭātmabhir nava-dukūla-vibhūṣaṇa-srag-
gandhair nṛbhir yuvatibhiś ca virājamānam
uddīpta-dīpa-balibhiḥ prati-sadma jāla
niryāta-dhūpa-ruciraṁ vilasat-patākam
mūrdhanya-hema-kalaśai rajatoru-śṛṅgair
juṣṭaṁ dadarśa bhavanaiḥ kuru-rāja-dhāma

The roads of Indraprastha were sprinkled with water perfumed by the liquid from elephants' foreheads, and colorful flags, golden gateways and full waterpots enhanced the city's splendor. Men and young girls were beautifully arrayed in fine, new garments, adorned with flower garlands and ornaments, and anointed with aromatic sandalwood paste. Every home displayed glowing lamps and respectful offerings, and from the holes of the latticed windows drifted incense, further beautifying the city. Banners waved, and the roofs were decorated with golden globes on broad silver bases. Thus Kṛṣṇa saw the royal city of the king of the Kurus.

COMMENTARY: Taking the opportunity of the Lord's entrance to the city, Śukadeva describes the city's auspiciousness in two verses (31-32). The roads were completely drenched in water fragrant with sandalwood and the natural mada from elephants. The city especially shone (vi-rājamānam) with men and women having radiant limbs, dressed in new cloth for this occasion. Each house had lamps and incense coming through the lattices. Among all the Kurus with great wealth, Yudhiṣṭhira's city was most attractive because he was dearest to Kṛṣṇa.

Text 71.33

prāptaṁ niśamya nara-locana-pāna-pātram
autsukya-viślathita-keśa-dukūla-bandhāḥ
sadyo visṛjya gṛha-karma patīṁś ca talpe
draṣṭuṁ yayur yuvatayaḥ sma narendra-mārge

When the young women of the city heard that Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of pleasure for human eyes, had arrived, they hurriedly went onto the royal road to see him. They abandoned their household duties and even left

their husbands in bed, and in their eagerness the knots of their hair and garments came loose.

COMMENTARY: Three verses (33-35) describe the good fortune of the city's women. Their tied hair and clothing became unloosened because of their ardor. Some persons, attached to enjoyment, were lying down on the bed after taking lunch. Or in the early morning, they heard of Kṛṣṇa arriving in the city and being embraced by the Pāṇḍavas.

Text 71.34

tasmin su-saṅkula ibhāśva-ratha-dvipadbhiḥ
kṛṣṇam sa-bhāryam upalabhya gṛhādhirūḍhāḥ
nāryo vikīrya kusumair manasopaguhya
su-svāgataṁ vidadhur utsmaya-vīkṣitena

The royal road being quite crowded with elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers, the women climbed to the top of their houses, where they caught sight of Kṛṣṇa and his queens. The city ladies scattered flowers upon the Lord, embraced him in their minds and expressed their heartfelt welcome with broadly smiling glances.

COMMENTARY: The women directly saw Kṛṣṇa surrounded by elephants, etc., in profusion. Later, to see him clearly, they climbed on the roofs in order to sprinkle flowers. With their glances and excellent smiles indicating their attraction (utsmaya), they welcomed him, seeming to say, "How are you?" in order to please him. The welcome took place by their intense glances. This is how Śrīdhara Svāmī explains it. Or "welcoming" can refer to the general reception of a guest. Or, they welcomed him especially in order to reveal their sentiments (vi-dadhuḥ).

Text 71.35

ūcuḥ striyaḥ pathi nirīkṣya mukunda-patnīs
tārā yathoḍupa-sahāḥ kim akāry amūbhiḥ
yac cakṣuṣāṁ puruṣa-maulir udāra-hāsa
līlāvaloka-kalayotsavam ātanoti

Observing Mukunda's wives passing on the road like stars accompanying the moon, the women exclaimed, "What have these ladies done so that

the best of men bestows upon their eyes the joy of his generous smiles and playful sidelong glances?"

COMMENTARY: The women of the palace saw on the road the wives accompanying Kṛṣṇa. In order that Kṛṣṇa could enter the palace, they all left the road and came outside onto side streets. The wives moved along with Kṛṣṇa just as stars move along with the moon. They obtained only a glimpse of him since he was surrounded by great personalities. Thus they envied the queens. What have they done so that he, the best of men, completely distributes (ā-tanoti) to them an excellent smile or a smile that gives all bliss (udāra) and special happiness (utsava) of playful side glances, since, being the best of men, he is most suitable for service because of his beauty and qualities. Though he was capable of various sweet pastimes, only his glance is described since even by that they understood that he was most rare to attain. Or they did not want to show boldness.

Text 71.36

tatra tatropasaṅgamya paurā maṅgala-pāṇayaḥ
cakruḥ saparyāṁ kṛṣṇāya śreṇī-mukhyā hatainasaḥ

In various places citizens of the city came forward holding auspicious offerings for Kṛṣṇa, and sinless leaders of occupational guilds came forward to worship the Lord.

COMMENTARY: The businesses of the city are described. All the leaders were devoid of karmas on remembering him. They performed his worship (kṛṣṇāya).

Text 71.37

antaḥ-pura-janaiḥ prītyā mukundaḥ phulla-locanaiḥ
sa-sambhramair abhyupetaḥ prāviśad rāja-mandiram

With wide-open eyes, the members of the royal household came forward quickly with affection to greet Mukunda, and thus the Lord entered the royal palace.

COMMENTARY: Now the entrance into the palace is described. He was met by the palace residents with affection, and joyful eyes, who moved quickly

(sa-sambhramaiḥ). He entered the palace gracefully with the splendor of his attendants (pra-aviśat).

Text 71.38

pṛthā vilokya bhrātreyaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ tri-bhuvaneśvaram
prītātmotthāya paryaṅkāt sa-snuṣā pariṣasvaje

When Kuntī saw her nephew Kṛṣṇa, the master of the three worlds, her heart became filled with love. Rising from her couch with her daughter-in-law, she embraced the Lord.

COMMENTARY: She had special affection since he was her nephew and the cause of joy for the three worlds. In expectation of seeing the Lord, she had previously gone to the main palace and sat there. Then on seeing him, because of intense prema, she was unable to rise from her seat, but somehow she managed to do so. She embraced him. It is later mentioned that Draupadī however was standing behind with bowed head out of great respect. She was present with Kuntī, but did not embrace Kṛṣṇa. Śabda-smṛti also agrees with this interpretation. The compound sa-snuṣā is poetic license.

Text 71.39

govindaṁ gṛham ānīya deva-deveśam ādṛtaḥ
pūjāyāṁ nāvidat kṛtyaṁ pramodopahato nṛpaḥ

King Yudhiṣṭhira respectfully brought Govinda, the Supreme God of gods, to his personal quarters. The king was so overcome with joy that he could not remember all the rituals of worship.

COMMENTARY: Though he was to be known only by words, Kṛṣṇa was now visible to the senses (govindam). He was the most rare lord of Brahmā and other devatās (deva-deveśam). Yudhiṣṭhira respected him. Or "Why are you so confused, running here and there? I am dependent on you. Enough of this attempt at worshipping me! Just sit comfortably and let me gaze at you for a long time." In this manner, in many ways, he was respected (ādṛtaḥ) by Kṛṣṇa. As a king (nṛpaḥ) he possessed all assistance to perform worship properly with all its elements. But he could not remember what to do, since he was overcome with joy.

Text 71.40

pitṛ-svasur guru-strīṇāṁ kṛṣṇaś cakre ’bhivādanam
svayaṁ ca kṛṣṇayā rājan bhaginyā cābhivanditaḥ

Kṛṣṇa bowed down to his aunt and the wives of his elders, O King, and then Draupadī and the Lord’s sister bowed down to him.

COMMENTARY: Thought they could not complete the worship because of confusion due to joy, Kṛṣṇa took the worship as complete and then continued with other actions. O Parīkṣit! It is fortunate that you have been born in such a family.

Text 71.41–42

śvaśṛvā sañcoditā kṛṣṇā kṛṣṇa-patnīś ca sarvaśaḥ
ānarca rukmiṇīṁ satyāṁ bhadrāṁ jāmbavatīṁ tathā
kālindīṁ mitravindāṁ ca śaibyāṁ nāgnajitīṁ satīm
anyāś cābhyāgatā yās tu vāsaḥ-sraṅ-maṇḍanādibhiḥ

Encouraged by her mother-in-law, Draupadī worshiped all of Kṛṣṇa’s wives, including Rukmiṇī; Satyabhāmā; Bhadrā; Jāmbavatī; Kālindī; Mitravindā, the descendant of Śibi; the chaste Nāgnajitī; and the other queens of the Lord who were present. Draupadī honored them all with such gifts as clothing, flower garlands and jewelry.

COMMENTARY: Draupadī was encouraged by Kuntī, who supplied her with assistants and appropriate items for worship (sam-coditā). The word ca indicates that she also worshiped their daughters and the wives of their sons. She worshipped each one, with all methods of worship (sarvaśaḥ). Śaibya refers to Mitrāvinda. The second ca refers to Lakṣmaṇā. Or śaibya can mean auspicious. This word then refers to Lakṣmaṇā who had all auspicious qualities.

Text 71.43

sukhaṁ nivāsayām āsa dharma-rājo janārdanam
sa-sainyaṁ sānugāmatyaṁ sa-bhāryaṁ ca navaṁ navam

King Yudhiṣṭhira arranged for Kṛṣṇa’s rest and saw to it that all who came along with him—namely his queens, soldiers, ministers and secretaries—were comfortably situated. He arranged that they would experience a

new feature of reception every day while staying as guests of the Pāṇḍavas.

COMMENTARY: He made arrangements for them because he was the king of dharma. Kṛṣṇa is called Janārdana because the devotees always request to see him (janārdanam). It was suitable for Yudhiṣṭhira to make these arrangements for Kṛṣṇa since Yudhiṣṭhira was the best of devotees wanting to see him.

Text 71.44–45

tarpayitvā khāṇḍavena vahniṁ phālguna-saṁyutaḥ
mocayitvā mayaṁ yena rājñe divyā sabhā kṛtā
uvāsa katicin māsān rājñaḥ priya-cikīrṣayā
viharan ratham āruhya phālgunena bhaṭair vṛtaḥ

During his stay, he and Arjuna satisfied the fire-god by offering him the Khāṇḍava forest, and they saved Maya Dānava, who then built King Yudhiṣṭhira a celestial assembly hall. Desiring to do other pleasing actions for the king, the Lord resided at Indraprastha for several months. The Lord also took the opportunity to go riding in his chariot in the company of Arjuna, surrounded by a retinue of soldiers.

COMMENTARY: Yudhiṣṭhira did not expect any payment for this. Instead of kṛtā sometimes hṛtā (offered) is seen. Desiring to do other pleasing actions (priya-cikīrṣayā) for the king, Kṛṣṇa stayed several months. With Arjuna and troops including Sātyaki, he went riding on his chariot.

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[1] They are mentioned as associates in Vaikuṇṭha in SB 2.9.15.

Chapter Seventy-two
The Slaying of the Demon Jarāsandha

Text 72.1–2

śrī-śuka uvāca
ekadā tu sabhā-madhya āsthito munibhir vṛtaḥ
brāhmaṇaiḥ kṣatriyair vaiśyair bhrātṛbhiś ca yudhiṣṭhiraḥ
ācāryaiḥ kula-vṛddhaiś ca jñāti-sambandhi-bāndhavaiḥ
śṛṇvatām eva caiteṣām ābhāṣyedam uvāca ha

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: One day, as King Yudhiṣṭhira sat in the royal assembly surrounded by eminent sages, brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and vaiśyas, and also by his brothers, spiritual masters, family elders, blood relations, in-laws and friends, he addressed Kṛṣṇa as everyone listened.

COMMENTARY: After several days relaxing, at an appropriate time Yudhiṣṭhira spoke. The word tu indicates another time. It is understood that the Lord had not come to the assembly previously. The word ca indicates that the sons of Yudhiṣṭhira's brothers were also present. The second ca indicates other elders. He was surrounded by relatives also (bāndhavaiḥ). They all gathered at once, because of the nature of the king, because they were constantly attracted to see the Lord who had come with his followers, and because some had been called by the king for advice. He spoke while everyone listened. Or he came down from his throne in order to make an announcement, since it was suitable for his intended praise, and he remained standing there with folded hands (ā-sthitaḥ). He spoke so that others would listen, in order to give them pleasure. He spoke with joy (ha).

Text 72.3

śrī-yudhiṣṭhira uvāca
kratu-rājena govinda rājasūyena pāvanīḥ
yakṣye vibhūtīr bhavatas tat sampādaya naḥ prabho

Śrī Yudhiṣṭhira said: O Govinda, I desire to worship your auspicious expansions by the Rājasūya sacrifice, the king of Vedic ceremonies.

Please make our endeavor a success, my Lord.

COMMENTARY: The rājasūya is called the king of sacrifices since it is difficult to perform. In worshipping devatās during the sacrifice, Yudhiṣṭhira understood that they were the Lord's vibhūtis. This indicates the full devotion of Yudhiṣṭhira to Kṛṣṇa. Though Nārada had indicated that Yudhiṣṭhira desired the sacrifice to get wealth for worshiping Kṛṣṇa, with humility Yudhiṣṭhira indicated another reason for the sacrifice. The sacrifice will destroy obstacles to bhakti. Being dissatisfied, he said, "Govinda, this desire is proper for us devotees since you have appeared on earth to reveal your unlimited glories."

The singular verb is used though Yudhiṣṭhira was not the principal person in the sacrifice. It depended on many persons such as his brothers and sages. But by your śakti this can be accomplished. O capable one (prabho), endowed with all powers! I will accomplish this sacrifice because of you. Or you are our master (prabho) and we are surrendered to you. Therefore this sacrifice is suitable.

Text 72.4

tvat-pāduke avirataṁ pari ye caranti
dhyāyanty abhadra-naśane śucayo gṛṇanti
vindanti te kamala-nābha bhavāpavargam
āśāsate yadi ta āśiṣa īśa nānye

Purified persons who constantly serve, meditate upon and glorify your shoes, which destroy everything inauspicious, are sure to obtain freedom from material existence, O lotus-naveled Lord! Even if they desire something in this world, they obtain it, whereas others—those who do not take shelter of you—are never satisfied, O Lord.

COMMENTARY: Persons who constantly serve your shoes obtain liberation, what to speak of those who serve your lotus feet directly. What to speak of those who without effort meditate on them or without effort glorify them. They glorify your shoes as the object of devotion, for they destroy all inauspiciousness at once. They become free of all inauspicious obstacles to bhakti, internally and externally (śucayaḥ). If these people do not fully engage in bhakti, they still obtain all material and non-material enjoyment

and destruction of saṁsāra. The Lord himself says this and it is not available to others:

sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate 'ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati

If somehow or other my devotee desires Svarga, liberation, or residence in my abode, he easily achieves such benedictions. SB 11.20.33

It is also said:

svargāpavargayoḥ puṁsāṁ rasāyāṁ bhuvi sampadām
sarvāsām api siddhīnāṁ mūlaṁ tac-caraṇārcanam

Devotional service to his lotus feet is the root cause of all the perfections a person can find in heaven, in liberation, in the subterranean regions and on earth. SB 10.81.19

The reason is given. You have a lotus navel (as Garbhodakaśāyī): you are the shelter of all the worlds just by your expansion. You are the controller of all beings (īśa). Or joining the last statement with aviratam the meaning is "They enjoy blessings constantly."

Text 72.5

tad deva-deva bhavataś caraṇāravinda-
sevānubhāvam iha paśyatu loka eṣaḥ
ye tvāṁ bhajanti na bhajanty uta vobhayeṣāṁ
niṣṭhāṁ pradarśaya vibho kuru-sṛñjayānām

Therefore, O Lord of lords, let the people of this world see the power of devotional service rendered to your lotus feet. Please show them, O almighty one, the position of those Kurus and Sṛñjayas who worship you, and the position of those who do not.

COMMENTARY: "If you know the glories of bhakti to me, why do you give up bhakti for performing a rājasūya sacrifice?" Because of what I just said, you should let the world see your power. You are to be worshipped by all persons worthy of worship (deva-deva). Even though we know that by service to you all the devatās are satisfied, still, let the world know. In your present avatāra, full of mercy for all the people (iha), let these people (eṣa

lokaḥ), materialists generally, who are astonished only by wealth, see the power of serving your lotus feet.

He then illustrates this. The Kurus and Sṛñjayas worship you whereas Duryodhana and others do not worship you. Show the position of each. I am doing this in order to show to the materialists the glory of bhakti rendered to you. You can do anything (vibho). Therefore this is nothing for you. The accompanying purpose mentioned by Nārada, the desire to gain of wealth to serve Kṛṣṇa, he did not reveal out of shyness.

Text 72.6

na brahmaṇaḥ sva-para-bheda-matis tava syāt
sarvātmanaḥ sama-dṛśaḥ sva-sukhānubhūteḥ
saṁsevatāṁ sura-taror iva te prasādaḥ
sevānurūpam udayo na viparyayo 'tra

Within your mind there can be no such differentiation as "This one is mine, and that is another's," because you are the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Soul of all beings, always equipoised and enjoying happiness within yourself. Just like the heavenly desire tree, you bless all who properly worship you, granting their desired fruits in proportion to the service they render you. There is nothing wrong in this.

COMMENTARY: The desire tree gives results to those who worship even though they do not have a strong attraction. Or, there are no distinctions that one person can worship because he is qualified and another cannot worship because he is unqualified. It is merciful to anyone who serves it with respect (sam-sevatāṁ). But in worshipping you, the result is not just according to the service. The result is more. Even if there is an irregularity in the worship, the opposite, no result (viparyayaḥ), does not take place.

tulasī-dala-mātreṇa jalasya culukena vā
vikrīṇīte svam ātmānaṁ bhaktebhyo bhakta-vatsalaḥ.

Kṛṣṇa, who is very affectionate toward his devotees, sells himself to a devotee who offers merely a tulasī leaf and a palmful of water. Viṣṇu-dharma

According to the bhāva of the devotee there will be various degrees of the result. Faith is the cause.

tyaktvā sva-dharmaṁ caraṇāmbujaṁ harer
bhajann apakvo 'tha patet tato yadi
yatra kva vābhadram abhūd amuṣya kiṁ
ko vārtha āpto 'bhajatāṁ sva-dharmataḥ

If a person having given up sva-dharma, begins the worship of the Lord's lotus feet, and happens to deviate or not reach perfection, there is no misfortune for him at all in the future. But what does the person who follows sva-dharma but does not worship the Lord gain? SB 1.5.17

Text 72.7

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
samyag vyavasitaṁ rājan bhavatā śatru-karśana
kalyāṇī yena te kīrtir lokān anubhaviṣyati

The Lord said: Your decision is perfect, O King, and thus your noble fame will spread to all the worlds, O tormentor of your enemies.

COMMENTARY: The Lord's mercy, which is more profuse than that of the desire tree, is shown by his words. What you decided is very good. The reasons will be explained. O King! Because this is the duty of the king, it is auspicious for the whole world or will produce bhakti to me in all the people. It will spread to all the people (anu lokān).

Text 72.8

ṛṣīṇāṁ pitṛ-devānāṁ suhṛdām api naḥ prabho
sarveṣām api bhūtānām īpsitaḥ kratu-rāḍ ayam

My lord, for the great sages, the forefathers and the devatās, for our well-wishing friends and for all living beings, the performance of this king of Vedic sacrifices is desirable.

COMMENTARY: The sacrifice not only brings you all happiness but the gain of fame. By the sacrifice everyone becomes happy. For Pitṛs, devatās, and us, your friends, this sacrifice will increase our appreciation of the Lord and thus increase our affection for him. Or this sacrifice is desired by all because of your humble nature. You are capable (prabho)!

Text 72.9

vijitya nṛpatīn sarvān kṛtvā ca jagatīṁ vaśe
sambhṛtya sarva-sambhārān āharasva mahā-kratum

First conquer all kings, bring the earth under your control and collect all the required paraphernalia; then execute this great sacrifice.

COMMENTARY: Having shown this, he encourages the king in two verses (9-10). Conquering Jarāsandha and others completely (vi-jitya), making them subservient and taking their wealth at your will, and bringing the world under your control, collect the ingredients and perform (āharasva) the sacrifice. Or, bring the sacrifice under your control (āharasva).

Text 72.10

ete te bhrātaro rājaḹ loka-pālāṁśa-sambhavāḥ
jito ’smy ātmavatā te ’haṁ durjayo yo ’kṛtātmabhiḥ

These brothers of yours, O King, have taken birth as partial expansions of the devatās ruling various planets. And you have me under control, you have conquered even me, who am unconquerable for those who cannot control their senses.

COMMENTARY: Pointing with his hand, Kṛṣṇa shows the glories of the Pāṇḍavas to encourage them. According to the rumor they are said to be expansions of the devatās. Actually the devatās are their expansions, since they are intimate associates of the Lord.

yūyaṁ nṛ-loke bata bhūri-bhāgā
lokaṁ punānā munayo ’bhiyanti
yeṣāṁ gṛhān āvasatīti sākṣād
gūḍhaṁ paraṁ brahma manuṣya-liṅgam

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, all of you [the Pāṇḍavas] are extremely fortunate, for the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, lives in your palace just like a human being. Great saintly persons know this very well, and therefore they constantly visit this house. SB 7.10.48

He addresses the king, indicating he is better than the others. He encourages him particularly. Even I am dependent on you. He indicates that the king is the best among all. I have been conquered by you. I am eternally under your control, since you have made me dedicated solely to

you (ātmavatā). Others do not have control of me. I am not conquered by those who have not offered their hearts to me (akṛtātmabhiḥ).

Text 72.11

na kaścin mat-paraṁ loke tejasā yaśasā śriyā
vibhūtibhir vābhibhaved devo 'pi kim u pārthivaḥ

No one in this world, even a devatā—what to speak of an earthly king—can defeat my devotee with his strength, beauty, fame or riches.

COMMENTARY: He makes his point using a negative and kaimutya. No one on earth, no devatā, no king can defeat a person who is inclined to me (mat-param), what to speak of you who are great devotees. Śriyā means "by beauty."

Text 72.12

śrī-śuka uvāca
niśamya bhagavad-gītaṁ prītaḥ phulla-mukhāmbujaḥ
bhrātṝn dig-vijaye 'yuṅkta viṣṇu-tejopabṛṁhitān

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Upon hearing these words sung by the Supreme Lord, King Yudhiṣṭhira became joyful, and his face blossomed like a lotus. Thus he sent forth his brothers, who were empowered with his potency, to conquer all directions.

COMMENTARY: Hearing the words of the Lord, full of all powers (bhagavad), which were like a song because of his affection, which indicated the success of the sacrifice and increased their enthusiasm, Yudhiṣṭhira became joyful and sent his brothers who were filled with the power of the Lord who pervades the universe (viṣṇu). In order to conquer the directions, at this time Kṛṣṇa gave them his own powers, or they had these powers of the Lord at all times.

Text 72.13

sahadevaṁ dakṣiṇasyām ādiśat saha sṛñjayaiḥ
diśi pratīcyāṁ nakulam udīcyāṁ savyasācinam
prācyāṁ vṛkodaraṁ matsyaiḥ kekayaiḥ saha madrakaiḥ

He sent Sahadeva to the south with the Sṛñjayas, Nakula to the west with the Matsyas, Arjuna to the north with the Kekayas, and Bhīma to the east with the Madrakas.

COMMENTARY: This verse describes where he sent them. Out of affection, he sent Sahadeva to the south and Nakula to the west on considering their strength. It was certain they would conquer everyone there and surpass all difficulties, since those places were not difficult to approach and conquer. He sent Arjuna north, because this direction was difficult to cross due to huge mountains, with Gandharvas and devatās difficult to conquer. Arjuna was famous for being able to draw his bow with the left hand (savya-sācinam). In this way he is glorified in the verse. He sent Bhīma to the east, with the expectation that he would defeat Jarāsandha, who was equal to him in strength. In this way he gave orders to them from younger to older, each with successive importance.

Text 72.14

te vijitya nṛpān vīrā ājahrur digbhya ojasā
ajāta-śatrave bhūri draviṇaṁ nṛpa yakṣyate

After defeating many kings swiftly, these heroic brothers brought back abundant wealth for Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, who was intent on performing the sacrifice, O King.

COMMENTARY: They defeated the kings swiftly (ojasā) because they were courageous (vīrāḥ). Though the kings were defeated, they did not hate Yudhiṣṭhira, who had no enemy. Rather they had devotion to him, since Yudhiṣṭhira had no hatred for any of them, due to his nature. The victory was for performing the rājasūya sacrifice. Instead of ājahruḥ sometimes ājigyuḥ is seen. Then the meaning is "They conquered the kings and wealth for Yudhiṣṭhira and came back." O King! This is more glorious than the acts of previous kings. Please hear carefully. He says this to encourage Parīkṣit.

Text 72.15

śrutvājitaṁ jarāsandhaṁ nṛpater dhyāyato hariḥ
āhopāyaṁ tam evādya uddhavo yam uvāca ha

When King Yudhiṣṭhira heard that Jarāsandha remained undefeated, he set to pondering, and then Kṛṣṇa, the source of all avatāras, told him the means Uddhava had described for defeating Jarāsandha.

COMMENTARY: Nārada told him that Jarāsandha remained unconquered. The Lord did not say yet what Uddhava had said. Yudhiṣṭhira thought in his mind how to defeat him. Though Bhīma was most courageous and filled with the power of the Lord, he returned without defeating Jarāsandha, on a secret instruction from the Lord. The Lord then told him the means with joy (ha). The Lord was the root form of all avatāras (ādyaḥ).

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam

Kṛṣṇa is the supreme controller. He is the enjoyer of innumerable consorts, and the possessor of an eternal form of knowledge and bliss. Though, he is without origin, he is the source of all other forms of God, and is the cause of all causes. He is Govinda, the boy who cares for the cows. Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1

Text 72.16

bhīmaseno 'rjunaḥ kṛṣṇo brahma-liṅga-dharās trayaḥ
jagmur girivrajaṁ tāta bṛhadratha-suto yataḥ

Thus Bhīmasena, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa disguised themselves as brāhmaṇas and went to Girivraja, my dear King, where the son of Bṛhadratha was to be found.

COMMENTARY: They wore the dress of brāhmaṇas who had finished their studies.

tapasvināṁ brāhmaṇānāṁ snātakānāṁ paricchadān
ācchādya suhṛdāṁ vākyair manojñair abhinanditāḥ

Disguising themselves with clothing of austere brāhmaṇas who had finished their studies, they were blessed by friends with kind words. Mahābhārata 2.18.22

This means they did not go on chariots. Instead of trayaḥ (three) sometimes tataḥ (after that) is seen. To kill Jarāsandha, it was necessary that Bhīma go. The Lord explains the reason Arjuna went:

mayi nītir balaṁ bhīme rakṣitā cāvayorjunaḥ
sādhayiṣyāma taṁ rājan vayaṁ traya ivāgnayaḥ

I will give political counsel, Bhīma has strength and Arjuna is our protector. We three, like fire, will accomplish the task, O king. Mahābhārata 2.18.2

However, this was only a pretext. He took Arjuna because of friendship. Girivraja was Jarāsandha's city. Śukadeva called to Parīkṣit with extreme joy at the disguise of the three in brāhmaṇas' clothing. Jarāsandha was the son of Bṛhadratha. This indicates his great courage, since his dynasty was famous.

Text 72.17

te gatvātithya-velāyāṁ gṛheṣu gṛha-medhinam
brahmaṇyaṁ samayāceran rājanyā brahma-liṅginaḥ

Disguised as brāhmaṇas, the royal warriors approached Jarāsandha at home during the appointed hour for receiving guests. They submitted their entreaty to that dutiful householder, who was especially respectful to the brahminical class.

COMMENTARY: They entered the inner rooms since Jarāsandha respected brāhmaṇas. They came at the time of lunch at noon, and made their request (ayāceran) while reciting praises and scriptures. The irregularity of the verb is according to the rule vyatyayo bahulam. (Pāṇini 3.1.85) Jarāsandha was attached to household duties (gṛha-medhinam) and thus was devoted to brāhmaṇas. Another version has gṛha-medhinām. This phrase then modifies atithya-velāyām. They came at the time for receiving householder guests.

Text 72.18

rājan viddhy atithīn prāptān arthino dūram āgatān
tan naḥ prayaccha bhadraṁ te yad vayaṁ kāmayāmahe

[Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Bhīma said:] O King, know us to be needy guests who have come to you from afar. We wish all good unto you. Please grant us whatever we desire.

COMMENTARY: Know that we are guests, and moreover we are begging, and have come from afar. They did not say they were brāhmaṇas because they

did not want to lie. It is proper that you give to us, since you are a king. A king must give what a brāhmaṇa asks. May you have all good fortune! They encourage him, by giving blessings like brāhmaṇas. Actually this blessing indicates he would get liberation. Give what we desire. That will bring you good fortune. Or, give us because we desire something from you so that we can have good fortune.

Text 72.19

kiṁ durmarṣaṁ titikṣūṇāṁ kim akāryam asādhubhiḥ
kiṁ na deyaṁ vadānyānāṁ kaḥ paraḥ sama-darśinām

What can the tolerant not bear? What will the wicked not do? What will the generous not give in charity? And how will those of equal vision see another person as an outsider?

COMMENTARY: Here they indicate that Jarāsandha has tolerance, generosity and equal vision. Therefore you should give us what we desire. And if you do not have these qualities, then you should not give. What cannot be done by you? By asking in this way they were skillful at first praising and then criticizing.

Text 72.20

yo ʼnityena śarīreṇa satāṁ geyaṁ yaśo dhruvam
nācinoti svayaṁ kalpaḥ sa vācyaḥ śocya eva saḥ

He indeed is to be censured and pitied who, though able to do so, fails to achieve with his temporary body the lasting fame glorified by great saints.

COMMENTARY: They then criticize. He who fails to achieve lasting fame sung by the saintly, because it is auspicious in this life and the next, is to be pitied. Though he is capable, and can attain fame without other's help, he does not. He is like a stingy merchant. Or, by himself, without inspiration from others, he does not attain fame. He is to be criticized by those who see faults and pitied by those who do not see faults. The word saḥ is repeated to emphasize his pitiful condition.

Text 72.21

hariścandro rantideva uñchavṛttiḥ śibir baliḥ
vyādhaḥ kapoto bahavo hy adhruveṇa dhruvaṁ gatāḥ

Hariścandra, Rantideva, Uñchavṛtti Mudgala, Śibi, Bali, the legendary hunter and pigeon, and many others have attained the permanent by means of the impermanent.

COMMENTARY: They give proof from the behavior of the saintly.

Text 72.22

śrī-śuka uvāca
svarair ākṛtibhis tāṁs tu prakoṣṭhair jyā-hatair api
rājanya-bandhūn vijñāya dṛṣṭa-pūrvān acintayat

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: From the sound of their voices, their physical stature and the marks of bowstrings on their forearms, Jarāsandha could tell that his guests were fallen kṣatriyas. He began to think he had seen them somewhere before.

COMMENTARY: Their voices were deep. They tried to perfect their disguise but hiding their physical features was beyond their control. Their bodies were beautiful, strong, muscular and erect. As he heard the voice, then saw their forms and then saw the bow marks, successively Jarāsandha became more and more convinced that they were not brāhmaṇas. He saw them as fallen kṣatriyas since they were disguising themselves as brāhmaṇas and begging. This is explained later.

Text 72.23

rājanya-bandhavo hy ete brahma-liṅgāni bibhrati
dadāni bhikṣitaṁ tebhya ātmānam api dustyajam

[Jarāsandha thought:] These are surely members of the royal order dressed as brāhmaṇas, but still I must grant their request for charity, even if they beg me for my own body.

COMMENTARY: He thought as follows. Another version has rājanya-bandhavo 'pi and dadāmi instead of dadāni. Even I should give them my body if they ask.

TextS 24–25

baler nu śrūyate kīrtir vitatā dikṣv akalmaṣā
aiśvaryād bhraṁśitasyāpi vipra-vyājena viṣṇunā
śriyaṁ jihīrṣatendrasya viṣṇave dvija-rūpiṇe
jānann api mahīm prādād vāryamāṇo 'pi daitya-rāṭ

The spotless glories of Bali Mahārāja are heard throughout the world. Viṣṇu, wishing to recover Indra's opulence from Bali, appeared before him in the guise of a brāhmaṇa and made him fall from his powerful position. Though aware of the ruse and forbidden by his guru, Bali, king of the demons, still gave Viṣṇu the whole earth in charity.

COMMENTARY: "But they are enemies." Though I know this for certain, I must accept them as brāhmaṇas, even though they are enemies disguised as brāhmaṇas, and grant their request like Bali since this will give fame. Two verses describe his way of thinking. Since the Lord was born to Kaśyapa and Aditi, Vāmana was actually a brāhmaṇa by birth. But he was also attached to Indra. Hiding kṣatriya tendencies, he took the form of Vāmana with the desire to assist Indra (thus he is called Upendra). Vāmana actually disguised himself as a brāhmaṇa. Remembering Vāmana's expanding himself in the universe, he praises him as Viṣṇu (viṣṇunā, viṣṇave). Bali gave with faith, even offering himself (pra-adāt) since he was the best of the demons (datya-rāṭ), respecting brāhmaṇas. He gave the earth, even though he knew from the beginning that he was being tricked.

Text 72.26

jīvatā brāhmaṇārthāya ko nv arthaḥ kṣatra-bandhunā
dehena patamānena nehatā vipulaṁ yaśaḥ

What is the use of an unqualified kṣatriya who goes on living but fails to gain everlasting glory by working with his perishable body for the benefit of brāhmaṇas?

COMMENTARY: "They will ask for your life, not your kingdom." This body can become successful by fate. If we do not use it properly it is useless. I should use this body for benefiting brāhmaṇas even if they have come only in the dress of brāhmaṇas. What is the use of living as a person born in a kṣatriya family (kṣastriya-bandhunā) who does not endeavor for fame using this

temporary body, for serving brāhmaṇas? Or kṣatriya-bandhunā can mean "by a kṣatriya fallen because of not serving brāhmaṇas."

Text 72.27

ity udāra-matiḥ prāha kṛṣṇārjuna-vṛkodarān
he viprā vriyatāṁ kāmo dadāmy ātma-śiro 'pi vaḥ

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus making up his mind, the generous Jarāsandha addressed Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Bhīma: "O learned brāhmaṇas, choose whatever you wish. I will give it to you, even if it is my own head."

COMMENTARY: Having a charitable mind or having a great mind (udāra-matiḥ), he spoke excellently (pra-āha), with a smiling face. Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Bhīma are mentioned in order of cleverness (from greater to lesser), for Yudhiṣṭhira identifies their positions in Mahābhārata. Arjunaḥ kṛṣṇam anvetu bhīmo anvetu dhanañjayam: let Arjuna follow Kṛṣṇa, and let Bhīma follow Arjuna. (Mahābhārata, Sabhā Parva). He addressed them as brāhmaṇas, with his previous understanding in mind, and as mockery.

Text 72.28

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
yuddhaṁ no dehi rājendra dvandvaśo yadi manyase
yuddhārthino vayaṁ prāptā rājanyā nānya-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ

The Supreme Lord said: O exalted King, give us battle in the form of a duel, if you think it fitting. We are princes and have come to beg a fight. We have no other request to make of you.

COMMENTARY: Having obtained his promise, Kṛṣṇa speaks boldly what they want, but not taking Uddhava's advice to have Bhīma fight him. O king of kings! It is proper for you to fight! He also suggests that he can negotiate peace by saying, "If you really wish." With cleverness he then emphasizes his request. We desire to fight because we are kṣatriyas. We do not desire food like brāhmaṇas. Instead of nānya-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ another version has yuddhetara-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ (we have no desire except to fight).

Text 72.29

asau vṛkodaraḥ pārthas tasya bhrātārjuno hy ayam
anayor mātuleyaṁ māṁ kṛṣṇaṁ jānīhi te ripum

Over there is Bhīma, son of Pṛthā, and this is his brother Arjuna. Know me to be their maternal cousin, Kṛṣṇa, your enemy.

COMMENTARY: Have no doubt (hi). There is Bhīma and this is Arjuna. Know me to be Kṛṣṇa, who takes away (karṣaṇa) the life of people like you since I am your enemy (te ripum). To kill you, I have brought these two.

Text 72.30

evam āvedito rāja jahāsoccaiḥ sma māgadhaḥ
āha cāmarṣito mandā yuddhaṁ tarhi dadāmi vaḥ

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus challenged, Magadharāja laughed out loud and contemptuously said, "All right, you weaklings, I'll give you a fight!

COMMENTARY: Jarāsandha laughed loudly since, though they had pretended to be humble brāhmaṇas. in the end he was satisfied on knowing the truth and also wanted to mock them. He was proud and without reserve, showing himself as a king (rāja). The people of Magadha had angry natures. Thus it was appropriate that the king of Magadha showed anger (amarṣitaḥ). O cowards (mandāḥ)! He says this because they came disguised as brāhmaṇas. Another meaning is amarṣitaḥ amandāḥ. This means "O intelligent ones or most excellent ones!"

Text 72.31

na tvayā bhīruṇā yotsye yudhi viklava-tejasā
mathurāṁ sva-purīṁ tyaktvā samudraṁ śaraṇaṁ gataḥ

"But I will not fight with you, Kṛṣṇa, for you are a coward. Your strength abandoned you in the midst of battle, and you fled your own capital of Mathurā to take shelter in the sea.

COMMENTARY: The phrase tvayā bhīruṇā can be taken as tvayā abhīruṇā: you are not a coward. Therefore you gave up your city, and built a house in the sea for performing pastimes.

Text 72.32

ayaṁ tu vayasā tulyo nāti-sattvo na me samaḥ
arjuno na bhaved yoddhā bhīmas tulya-balo mama

"As for this one, Arjuna, he is not as old as I, though he is very strong. Since he is no match for me, he should not be the contender. Bhīma, however, is as strong as I am."

COMMENTARY: Though Arjuna is very strong, he is not equal in age (vayasā tulyo na).

Text 72.33

ity uktvā bhīmasenāya prādāya mahatīṁ gadām
dvitīyāṁ svayam ādāya nirjagāma purād bahiḥ

Having said this, Jarāsandha offered Bhīmasena a huge club, took up another himself and went outside the city.

COMMENTARY: Jarāsandha gave (dāya) a large club to Bhīma with a smiling face (pra), offering it with his own hand (ā). He considered the large club to be good for Bhīma, since it could not be lifted. Or he gave a large club out of respect for his strength. He went outside the city in order to make the arena and so that the citizens could see his strength and sporting.

Text 72.34

tataḥ samekhale vīrau saṁyuktāv itaretaram
jaghnatur vajra-kalpābhyāṁ gadābhyāṁ raṇa-durmadau

The two heroes thus began battling each other on the level fighting grounds outside the city. Maddened with the fury of combat, they struck each other with their lightning-bolt-like clubs.

COMMENTARY: Absorbed in fighting (saṁyuktau), they hit each other with the clubs since they were intoxicated with the fight.

Text 72.35

maṇḍalāni vicitrāṇi savyaṁ dakṣiṇam eva ca
caratoḥ śuśubhe yuddhaṁ naṭayor iva raṅgiṇoḥ

As they skillfully circled left and right, like actors dancing on a stage, the fight presented a magnificent spectacle.

COMMENTARY: Sometimes they went left or right and sometimes faced each other (eva ca).

Text 72.36

tataś caṭa-caṭā-śabdo vajra-niṣpesa-sannibhaḥ
gadayoḥ kṣiptayo rājan dantayor iva dantinoḥ

When Jarāsandha's and Bhīmasena's clubs loudly collided, O King, the sound was like the impact of the big tusks of two fighting elephants, or the crash of thunderbolts.

COMMENTARY: The clashing of their clubs as they beat each other (kṣiptayaḥ) was like the sound of thunderbolts striking.

Text 72.37

te vai gade bhuja-javena nipātyamāne
anyonyato 'ṁsa-kaṭi-pāda-karoru-jatrum
cūrṇī-babhūvatur upetya yathārka-śākhe
saṁyudhyator dviradayor iva dīpta-manvyoḥ

They swung their clubs at each other with such speed and force that as the clubs struck their shoulders, hips, feet, hands, thighs and collarbones, the weapons were crushed and broken like branches of arka trees with which two enraged elephants furiously attack each other.

COMMENTARY: Though the compound consists of limbs of a living being, the lack of neuter (jatrūn in some versions) is poetic license. Just as arka trees are crushed, the weapons were crushed. The simile is an example of adbhutopama (a comparison causing wonder).

Text 72.38

itthaṁ tayoḥ prahatayor gadayor nṛ-vīrau
kruddhau sva-muṣṭibhir ayaḥ-sparaśair apiṣṭām
śabdas tayoḥ praharator ibhayor ivāsīn
nirghāta-vajra-paruṣas tala-tāḍanotthaḥ

Their clubs thus ruined, those great heroes among men angrily pummeled each other with their iron-hard fists. As they struck each

other, the sound resembled the crash of elephants colliding or harsh thunderclaps.

COMMENTARY: When the clubs were destroyed, they beat each other's limbs (apiṣṭām) with fists like the touch of iron. They then hit each other with the palms of their hands with a harsh sound like thunder in a cloudless sky (nirghāta).

Text 72.39

tayor evaṁ praharatoḥ sama-śikṣā-balaujasoḥ
nirviśeṣam abhūd yuddham akṣīṇa-javayor nṛpa

As they thus fought, this contest between opponents of equal training, strength and stamina reached no conclusion. And so they kept on fighting, O King, without becoming tired.

COMMENTARY: They fought without becoming tired (akṣīṇa-javayoḥ). They did not stop fighting.

Text 72.40

śatror janma-mṛtī vidvāñ jīvitaṁ ca jarā-kṛtam
pārtham āpyāyayan svena tejasācintayad dhariḥ

Kṛṣṇa knew the secret of his enemy Jarāsandha's birth and death, and also how he had been given life by the demoness Jarā. Considering all this, Kṛṣṇa filled Bhīma with his special power.

COMMENTARY: Jarāsandha had been produced when the demoness Jarā joined two halves of his body together. Bhīma was the object of Kṛṣṇa's affection because he was the son of Kuntī (pārtham).

Text 72.41

sañcintyārī-vadhopāyaṁ bhīmasyāmogha-darśanaḥ
darśayām āsa viṭapaṁ pāṭayann iva saṁjñayā

Having determined how to kill the enemy, that Lord of infallible vision made a sign to Bhīma by tearing in half a small branch of a tree.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa had true or unobstructed knowledge (amogha-darśanaḥ). The word iva is only an ornament.

Text 72.42

tad vijñāya mahā-sattvo bhīmaḥ praharatāṁ varaḥ
gṛhītvā pādayoḥ śatruṁ pātayām āsa bhū-tale

Understanding this sign, mighty Bhīma, the best of fighters, seized his opponent by the feet and threw him to the ground.

COMMENTARY: Because he was strong (mahā-sattvaḥ) and skillful at fighting (paraharatāṁ varaḥ), he threw Jarāsandha on the ground.

Text 72.43

ekam pādaṁ padākramya dorbhyām anyaṁ pragṛhya saḥ
gudataḥ pāṭayām āsa sākham iva mahā-gajaḥ

Bhīma pressed down on one leg with his foot while grabbing Jarāsandha's other leg in his hands, and just as a great elephant might break the branch of a tree, Bhīma tore Jarāsandha apart from the anus upward.

COMMENTARY: He pressed the foot of his enemy with his foot.

Text 72.44

eka-pādoru-vṛṣaṇa-kaṭi-pṛṣṭha-stanāṁsake
eka-bāhv-akṣi-bhrū-karṇe śakale dadṛśuḥ prajāḥ

The King's subjects then saw him lying in two separate pieces, each with a single leg, thigh, testicle, hip, shoulder, arm, eye, eyebrow and ear, and with half a back and chest.

COMMENTARY: The limbs are mentioned from the lower to the upper body.

Text 72.45

hāhā-kāro mahān āsīn nihate magadheśvare
pūjayām āsatur bhīmaṁ parirabhya jayācyatau

With the death of the lord of Magadha, a great cry of lamentation arose, while Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa congratulated Bhīma by embracing him.

COMMENTARY: They worshiped him by saying "Very good!" and fanned him. Arjuna is called Jaya (victory) to indicate his suitability to assist in this endeavor. His name is mentioned first in order to glorify him. Kṛṣṇa was fixed (acyutau) on considering him worthy of respect like himself.

Text 72.46

sahadevaṁ tat-tanayaṁ bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanaḥ
abhyaṣiñcad ameyātmā magadhānāṁ patiṁ prabhuḥ
mocayām āsa rājanyān saṁruddhā māgadhena ye

The immeasurable Lord, the sustainer and benefactor of all living beings, coronated Jarāsandha's son, Sahadeva, as the new ruler of the Magadhas. The Lord then freed all the kings Jarāsandha had imprisoned.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa enthroned Jarāsandha's son because Kṛṣṇa was full of all powers (bhagavān), was the creator of the universe (bhūta-bhāvanaḥ), was spread everywhere (ameyātmā) and was the master of everyone (prabhuḥ). Since he had all powers to create billions of such kingdoms immediately by his great energies, he had no desire for this insignificant kingdom. Or, as the Lord with all powers (bhagavān), he did not depend on this kingdom, but he was also merciful, being the protector of all beings (bhūta-bhāvanaḥ). Moreover he had unlimited intelligence (ameyātmā). By personally enthroning Sahadeva, he would assist the Pāṇḍavas in holding the rājasūya sacrifice since Sahadeva would then follow his orders with faith. Moreover he was in possession of all wealth or was Lord of the universe (prabhuḥ). Therefore enthroning Sahadeva was proper for him. The words describing the Lord are successively greater reasons for Kṛṣṇa to enthrone Sahadeva.

Chapter Seventy-three
Lord Kṛṣṇa Blesses the Liberated Kings

Text 73.1–6

śrī-śuka uvāca
ayute dve śatāny aṣṭau niruddhā yudhi nirjitāḥ
te nirgatā giridroṇyāṁ malinā mala-vāsasaḥ
kṣut-kṣāmāḥ śuṣka-vadanāḥ saṁrodha-parikarśitāḥ
dadṛśus te ghana-śyāmaṁ pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam
śrīvatsāṅkaṁ catur-bāhuṁ padma-garbhāruṇekṣaṇam
cāru-prasanna-vadanaṁ sphuran-makara-kuṇḍalam
padma-hastaṁ gadā-śaṅkha rathāṅgair upalakṣitam
kirīṭa-hāra-kaṭaka-kaṭi-sūtrāṅgadāñcitam
bhrājad-vara-maṇi-grīvaṁ nivītaṁ vana-mālayā
pibanta iva cakṣurbhyāṁ lihanta iva jihvayā
jighranta iva nāsābhyāṁ rambhanta iva bāhubhiḥ
praṇemur hata-pāpmāno mūrdhabhiḥ pādayor hareḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Jarāsandha had defeated 20,800 kings in combat and thrown them into prison. As these kings emerged from the Giridroṇī fortress, they appeared dirty and shabbily dressed. They were emaciated by hunger, their faces were dried up, and they were greatly weakened by their long imprisonment. The kings then beheld the Lord before them. His complexion was dark blue like the color of a cloud, and he wore a yellow silk garment. He was distinguished by the Śrīvatsa mark on his chest, his four mighty arms, the pinkish hue of his eyes, which resembled the whorl of a lotus, his lovely, cheerful face, his gleaming makara earrings and the lotus, club, conch and disc in his hands. A helmet, a jeweled necklace, a golden belt, and golden bracelets and armlets decorated his form, and on his neck he wore both the brilliant, precious Kaustubha gem and a garland of forest flowers. The kings seemed to drink his beauty with their eyes, lick him with their tongues, relish his fragrance with their nostrils and embrace him with their arms. Their past

sins now eradicated, the kings all bowed down to Kṛṣṇa, placing their heads at his feet.

COMMENTARY: Malināḥ should be malinaḥ. The Lord whom the kings saw is described in three verses (3-5). First his complexion is described, and then related to that, his clothing. Then his special features, such as Śrīvatsa are described. His eyes were pink like the inner petal of a lotus. His face was constantly smiling, beautiful because of its youth, color and features. His ornaments are described starting from the head. His earrings are described first because they made his face beautiful. The makara earrings shone because of gold and jewels, and because of his two cheeks. He was recognizable by the cakra, club, lotus and conch. Starting on the right bottom hand, going clockwise were the lotus, club, conch and cakra. These are the markings of Adhokṣaja according to Siddhārtha-saṁhitā. He showed these symbols in order to be known as Kṛṣṇa and as the Supreme Lord. Since he appears according to the type of bhakti, and the order of seeing them is not regulated, the crown and ornaments are not described in a particular order.

The kings had long been suffering from hunger and thirst, but by good fortune they attained sweet nectar. But they became attached to Lord, not completely satisfied with seeing him suddenly. The word iva should be supplied to all the phrases to indicate a comparison (as if) and express their great attraction. Their eyes became wide in order to see him, their tongues tasted him by opening their mouths to praise him, their nostrils became wide to smell him, and their arms constantly embraced him. “Arms” is in the plural rather than dual since their arms moved about like currents of water. As a knowledge gathering sense, their arms were used to obtain the happiness of touching him. The ears are not mentioned since they did not hear him speak yet. Because they were absorbed in the other four senses, the absence of the sense of hearing was not noticed. Most of their sins were destroyed by surrendering on sending the messenger to Kṛṣṇa previously. Now all the obstacles to attachment to Kṛṣṇa were destroyed. Or their sins were destroyed by hearing about him.

Text 73.7

kṛṣṇa-sandarśanāhlāda dhvasta-saṁrodhana-klamāḥ
praśaśaṁsur hṛṣīkeśaṁ gīrbhiḥ prāñjalayo nṛpāḥ

The ecstasy of beholding Kṛṣṇa having dispelled the weariness of their imprisonment, the kings stood with joined palms and offered words of praise to that supreme master of the senses.

COMMENTARY: They praised the Lord who pleases all the senses or who inspired them to offer praise by his mercy (hṛṣikeśam) using profuse words in order to indicate his excellence. By praising the Lord, they acted as proper kings, protecting all the citizens (nṛpāḥ).

Text 73.8

rājāna ūcuḥ
namas te deva-deveśa prapannārti-harāvyaya
prapannān pāhi naḥ kṛṣṇa nirviṇṇān ghora-saṁsṛteḥ

The kings said: Obeisances to you, O Lord of the ruling O destroyer of your surrendered devotees' distress. Since we have surrendered to you, O inexhaustible Kṛṣṇa, please save us from this terrible material life, which has made us so despondent.

COMMENTARY: Protect us from saṁsāra, fearful because it makes us inimical to you. "Why?" We are surrendered to you. "Offering the happiness of material enjoyment to me is somewhat a cause of bhakti." We are disgusted with material life (nirviṇṇān). We have become detached from enjoyment because of experiencing suffering. "For that purpose, you should pray to some devatā." You are the master of the lords of the devatās (devadevīśa). As the Supreme Lord this is suitable for you to do, not others. "If I am supreme, then why should I be attentive to persons like you?" You destroy the distress of the surrendered. "But if I am like that, there will then be unlimited surrendered souls." Your powers are inexhaustible (avyaya). And you are Kṛṣṇa. You are famous for delivering Pūtanā. What harm is there if there are unlimited surrendered souls? It will add to your fame if you deliver them all.

Text 73.9

nainaṁ nāthānusūyāmo māgadhaṁ madhusūdana
anugraho yad bhavato rājñāṁ rājya-cyutir vibho

O master, Madhusūdana, we do not blame this King of Magadha, since it is actually by your mercy that kings fall from their royal position, O almighty Lord.

COMMENTARY: This verse is said in a joking manner. They speak of Jarāsandha with disrespect, pointing him out (enam) in front of them. We do not hate him though he is designated constantly as the object of hatred. Anu sūyamaḥ instead of anv asūyamaḥ is poetic license. We do not see it as a fault that we lost our kingdoms. Nothing else should have happened. O master, we have taken you as our master. You killed the first demon (madhusūdana), a low rascal. Killing him was your glory. Your glory is giving mercy to the suffering people. You can do anything (vibho)! They confirm what they have said.

Text 73.10

rājyaiśvarya-madonnaddho na śreyo vindate nṛpaḥ
tvan-māyā-mohito 'nityā manyate sampado 'calāḥ

Infatuated with his opulence and ruling power, a king loses all self-restraint and cannot obtain his true welfare. Thus bewildered by your illusory energy, he imagines his temporary assets to be permanent.

COMMENTARY: A king does not attain the best result, bhakti, but others do. Or even the best man (nṛpaḥ) does not attain bhakti because he imagines temporary material kingdoms to be real wealth. "Why does he think impermanent things are permanent?" By the power of your māyā he is bewildered.

Text 73.11

mṛga-tṛṣṇāṁ yathā bālā manyanta udakāśayam
evaṁ vaikārikīṁ māyām ayuktā vastu cakṣate

Just as deer consider a mirage to be a pond of water, so those who are irrational look upon the sense objects to be useful.

COMMENTARY: Unintelligent beings like deer consider a mirage to be water. The unintelligent person considers sense objects, transformations of māyā,

which are not really useful (vastu), to be useful. The example of the deer and the mirage is used to explain the useless aspect of enjoying material objects (rather than to explain that matter is unreal).

Text 73.12–13

vayaṁ purā śrī-mada-naṣṭa-dṛṣṭayo
jigīṣayāsyā itaretara-spṛdhaḥ
ghnantaḥ prajāḥ svā ati-nirghṛṇāḥ prabho
mṛtyuṁ puras tvāvigaṇayya durmadāḥ
ta eva kṛṣṇādya gabhīra-raṁhasā
duranta-vīryeṇa vicālitāḥ śriyaḥ
kālena tanvā bhavato 'nukampayā
vinaṣṭa-darpāś caraṇau smarāma te

Previously, blinded by the intoxication of riches, we wanted to conquer this earth, and thus we fought one another to achieve victory, mercilessly harassing our own subjects. We arrogantly disregarded you, O Lord, who stood before us as death. But now, O Kṛṣṇa, that powerful form of yours called time, moving mysteriously and irresistibly, has deprived us of our wealth. Now that you have mercifully destroyed our pride, we beg simply to remember your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY: Losing our kingdoms has been the cause of obtaining your mercy. Though the citizens should be protected like relatives (sva), we afflicted them by our fighting with each other since we were most cruel (ati-nirghṛṇāḥ). Death was always present before us, and we would necessarily die, since we could experience it by seeing fathers die. But you were the destroyer, death, in the form of time. Time is most powerful since it is your form (prabho)! No one can protect himself from your form of time. We did not respect you (avigaṇayya). Śrīdhara Svāmī explains how the kings are burdened with a kingdom, and without the kingdom they are no longer burdened.

No one has the power to overcome time. Time acts quickly without being noticed. Because of its subtlety, death approaches unnoticed. Its power cannot be counteracted (duranta-vīryeṇa) since it is your body. What time does is done by you. Agitated by this time, we have lost all pride because of your mercy. Thus, we remember you, since you attract all the senses of

the ātmārāmas (kṛṣṇa)! That has been testified by the great souls (SB 1.7.10). Why is it necessary for us to speak about this?

Text 73.14

atho na rājyam mṛga-tṛṣṇi-rūpitaṁ
dehena śaśvat patatā rujāṁ bhuvā
upāsitavyaṁ spṛhayāmahe vibho
kriyā-phalaṁ pretya ca karṇa-rocanam

Never again will we hanker for a mirage-like kingdom—a kingdom that must be slavishly served by this mortal body, which is simply a source of disease and suffering and which is declining at every moment. Nor, O almighty Lord, will we hanker to enjoy the heavenly fruits of religious acts in the next life, since the promise of such rewards is simply an empty enticement for the ears.

COMMENTARY: Mṛga-tṛṣṇi means mṛga-tṛṣṇā. Vopadeva's version has mṛga-tṛḍ. We should not desire a kingdom since its enjoyment is like a mirage (useless), and since we enjoy it with a body afflicted by sickness. Master (vibho)! On attaining you, how can this be attractive?

Text 73.15

taṁ naḥ samādiśopāyaṁ yena te caraṇābjayoḥ
smṛtir yathā na viramed api saṁsaratām iha

Please tell us how we may constantly remember your lotus feet, though we continue in the cycle of birth and death in this world.

COMMENTARY: "What do you want?" In concluding, they make their request with great longing and feeling, but out of humility they do not state their desire directly. Please instruct us a method that is understandable and possible (sam-ādiśa) so that we do not give up remembrance of your feet. Or, instruct us a method, according to your wish (yathā), by which we do not give up remembrance of your feet but constantly remember them. Previously we prayed for protection from frightful saṁsāra since it is an obstacle to remembering you. Now, if we remember you, we will be free of saṁsāra even if we are born in various bodies (iha). They pray for remembrance, not for protection. They do not even pray for that

protection as a result of remembrance, out of great humility or great respect for the Lord. Or while desiring to be completely fixed in remembrance, even though they know the process, they express themselves in complete lowness as previously.

Text 73.16

kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya haraye paramātmane
praṇata-kleśa-nāśāya govindāya namo namaḥ

Again and again we offer our obeisances unto Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva, destroyer of suffering, the shelter of prema, who vanquishes the suffering of all who surrender to him, and who appears as a cowherd boy.

COMMENTARY: Thinking themselves unqualified to pray to the Lord, they conclude by chanting his dear names sweetly in order to attain their goal. They offer respects with eight limbs on the ground. We offer respects to you, Svayam Bhagavān (kṛṣṇāya), who appeared to Vasudeva to show mercy to all people (vāsudevāya), and then destroyed the suffering of even the demons (haraye), not looking for their qualification, and showed yourself as attractive to all (haraye). And you are the supreme soul by your nature, the shelter of pure prema for all beings (paramātmane). Moreover, you destroy the obstacles to bhakti for your devotees (praṇata). You are most affectionate to your devotees and promote bhakti. This is shown by becoming a cowherd who walks in the forest (govindāya). They offer respects repeatedly (namo namaḥ).

Text 73.17

śrī-śuka uvāca
saṁstūyamāno bhagavān rājabhir mukta-bandhanaiḥ
tān āha karuṇas tāta śaraṇyaḥ ślakṣṇayā girā

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus the kings, now freed from bondage, glorified the Supreme Lord. Then, my dear Parīkṣit, that merciful bestower of shelter spoke to them with sweet words.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa was praised perfectly, with only bhakti (sam-stūyamānaḥ), since they had been freed from prison: they had developed great bhakti on realizing his mercy directly. The Lord spoke sweet words

since he was merciful and moreover compassionate to the surrendered (śaraṇyaḥ).

Text 73.18

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
adya prabhṛti vo bhūpā mayy ātmany akhileśvare
su-dṛḍhā jāyate bhaktir bāḍham āśaṁsitaṁ tathā

The Supreme Lord said: From now on, my dear kings, you will have firm devotion to me, the Supreme Self and the Lord of all that be. I assure you this will come to pass, just as you desire.

COMMENTARY: The Lord then states that from this time onwards they will have the highest, sweetest, indestructible bhakti with the remembrance of him. You will have devotion to me, the supreme soul, suitable for prema (ātmani), with great reverence to me as the Lord of all beings. Their bhakti would be mixed with prema and reverence. Pañcarātra says:

māhāṭmya-jñāna-pūrvas tu sudṛḍhaḥ sarvato 'dhikaḥ
sneho bhaktir iti proktaḥ tayā sārṣṭyādi nānyathā

Strong bhakti with an awareness of the Lord's greatness is called sneha-bhakti (dāsya bhakti). One certainly attains sāṛṣṭi and other benedictions.

Their bhakti would become definitely (bāḍham) strong now, since from this time obstacles were destroyed. The present tense is used to denote the near future. They would attain strong bhakti now. Just as you desired, that bhakti will appear. Śrīdhara Svāmī accepts yathā instead of tathā, though tathā is generally accepted.

Text 73.19

diṣṭyā vyavasitaṁ bhūpā bhavanta ṛta-bhāṣiṇaḥ
śrīy-aiśvarya-madonnāhaṁ paśya unmādakaṁ nṛṇām

Fortunately you have come to the proper conclusion, my dear kings, and what you have spoken is true. I can see that human beings' lack of self-restraint, which arises from their intoxication with opulence and power, simply leads to madness.

COMMENTARY: Praising them to make their bhakti strong, he agrees with what they stated. Your words are true because wealth and power certainly corrupt men. Śrī and aiśvarya mean wealth and power. Śrīyaiśvarya is used instead of śryaisvarya. This is like triyambaka instead of tryambaka.

Text 73.20

haihayo nahuṣo veṇo rāvaṇo narako 'pare
śrī-madād bhraṁśitāḥ sthānād deva-daitya-nareśvarāḥ

Haihaya, Nahuṣa, Veṇa, Rāvaṇa, Naraka and many other rulers of devatās, men and demons fell from their elevated positions because of infatuation with material opulence.

COMMENTARY: Others, such as devatās, demons and kings, fell.

Text 73.21

bhavanta etad vijñāya dehādy utpādyam anta-vat
māṁ yajanto 'dhvarair yuktāḥ prajā dharmeṇa rakṣyatha

Understanding that this material body and everything connected with it have a beginning and an end, worshipping me by Vedic sacrifices, with clear intelligence, you will protect your subjects in accordance with dharma.

COMMENTARY: On their attaining bhakti to him, he instructed them to protect everyone as they would protect themselves, on his order, since he desired that they protect the people and dharma in order to please him, in two and a half verses (21-23). Being dedicated to me (yuktāḥ), worshiping me with sacrifices in order to teach the people, protect the population by instituting dharma. Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary gives the form rakṣita. This is probably a mistake of the transcriber, or bhavantaḥ can be a vocative, with the rakṣata as an imperative, second person plural.

Text 73.22

santanvantaḥ prajā-tantūn sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhavābhavau
prāptaṁ prāptaṁ ca sevanto mac-cittā vicariṣyatha

As you live your lives, begetting generations of progeny and encountering happiness and distress, birth and death, always keep your minds fixed on

me.

COMMENTARY: Increasing generations of population nicely, experiencing happiness and distress with wealth or poverty, being equal in all these conditions, with your mind fixed on me, perform the conduct (ācāra) of a householder (vicariṣyatha).

Text 73.23

udāsīnāś ca dehādāv ātmārāmā dhṛta-vratāḥ
mayy āveśya manaḥ samyaṅ mām ante brahma yāsyatha

Be detached from the body and everything connected to it. Experiencing my pleasant form, steadfastly keep your worship of me, while concentrating your minds fully on me, you will ultimately attain me, the Supreme Brahman.

COMMENTARY: "But we will again be devoid of your bhakti because of intoxication with wealth, with attachment to family and attain an unfortunate destination." No, you will not. You will experience my pastime forest (ātmā ārāmāḥ), or you (ātma) will possess my pleasant form (ārāmāḥ). You will be fixed in the rules for performing my worship (dṛḍha-vratāḥ). Absorbing your mind in me, you will attain me, the Supreme Brahman, with closeness, at all times (samyak).

Text 73.24

śrī-śuka uvāca
ity ādiśya nṛpān kṛṣṇo bhagavān bhuvaneśvaraḥ
teṣāṁ nyayuṅkta puruṣān striyo majjana-karmaṇi

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus instructed the kings, Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all the worlds, engaged male and female servants in bathing and grooming them.

COMMENTARY: Though he was condensed bliss (kṛṣṇaḥ), and endowed with supreme powers rarely understood by Brahmā and others, and was revealing pastimes of power in the world, after instructing the kings, he directly engaged men in cleaning them, with women helping to complete the task.

Text 73.25

saparyāṁ kārayām āsa sahadevena bhārata
naradevocitair vastrair bhūṣaṇaiḥ srag-vilepanaiḥ

O descendant of Bharata, the Lord then had King Sahadeva honor them with offerings of clothing, jewelry, garlands and sandalwood paste, all suitable for royalty.

COMMENTARY: He had Sahadeva (Jarāsandha's son) honor them with cloth and other items. O descendent of Bharata! Śukadeva addresses Parīkṣit in joy, maintaining his own hopes concerning the Lord's affection for the lowly.

Text 73.26

bhojayitvā varānnena su-snātān samalaṅkṛtān
bhogaiś ca vividhair yuktāṁs tāmbūlādyair nṛpocitaiḥ

After they had been properly bathed and adorned, Kṛṣṇa saw to it that they dined on excellent food. He also presented them with various items befitting the pleasure of kings, such as betel-nut.

COMMENTARY: What did he do before honoring them? They were shaved and rubbed with oil on their limbs, including their heads. They then bathed. The servants then gave them clothing, ornaments, garlands and ointments. They were then fed. After that, they were offered betel-nut, fruits, roots and various drinks.

Text 73.27

te pūjitā mukundena rājāno mṛṣṭa-kuṇḍalāḥ
virejur mocitāḥ kleśāt prāvṛḍ-ante yathā grahāḥ

Honored by Mukunda and freed from tribulation, the kings shone splendidly, their earrings gleaming, just as the moon and other celestial bodies shine brilliantly in the sky at the end of the rainy season.

COMMENTARY: Respected or worshiped by the Lord who gives supreme bliss (mukundena), with glittering earrings, they shone even more than before (vi-rejuḥ). Though all their other ornaments shone, the earrings especially shone because of the beauty of their faces. They were freed from the

suffering of imprisonment and from saṁsāra. This was the reason they shone with pleasing faces. An example is given to show the beauty arising after freedom from suffering in prison. The monsoon season with clouds is like the imprisonment hiding their beauty.

Text 73.28

rathān sad-aśvān āropya maṇi-kāñcana-bhūṣitān
prīṇayya sunṛtair vākyaiḥ sva-deśān pratyayāpayat

Then the Lord arranged for the kings to be seated on chariots drawn by fine horses and adorned with jewels and gold, and pleasing them with gracious words, he sent them off to their own kingdoms.

COMMENTARY: He put them on the best, fast (sat) horses, with force, in his presence, with pleasing words. "You are mine and I am yours. You should come to the great sacrifice of my dearest devotee Yudhiṣṭhira." He sent them off to their states after reviving them.

Text 73.29

ta evaṁ mocitāḥ kṛcchrāt kṛṣṇena su-mahātmanā
yayus tam eva dhyāyantaḥ kṛtāni ca jagat-pateḥ

Thus liberated from all difficulty by Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of personalities, the kings departed, and as they went, they thought only of him, the Lord of the universe, and of his wonderful deeds.

COMMENTARY: They were released by Kṛṣṇa, the form of condensed bliss, who gave them bliss by being visible to them since he was a beautiful (su) and great person (ātmanā), having qualities like mercy, or since he had a form (ātmanā) excellent with all qualities. Therefore they thought of him and his activities—such as his blessings, or they thought of his activities like killing Jarāsandha.

Text 73.30

jagaduḥ prakṛtibhyas te mahā-puruṣa-ceṣṭitam
yathānvaśāsad bhagavāṁs tathā cakrur atandritāḥ

The kings told their ministers and other associates what the Lord had done, and then they diligently carried out the orders he had imparted to

them.

COMMENTARY: They loudly glorified his extraordinary activities – like freeing them and ending with sending them home – to their ministers, with joy, with astonishment and prema, out of devotion to the Lord. With attention and without laziness, out of faith, they did as the Lord, the crest jewel of all qualities (bhagavān), instructed.

Text 73.31

jarāsandhaṁ ghātayitvā bhīmasenena keśavaḥ
pārthābhyāṁ saṁyutaḥ prāyāt sahadevena pūjitaḥ

Having arranged for Bhīmasena to kill Jarāsandha, Keśava accepted worship from King Sahadeva and then departed with the two sons of Pṛthā.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa again took up his cakra and other weapons (keśavaḥ), showing himself to be the cause of all avatāras as Svayam Bhagavān. He then departed on Jarāsandha's excellent chariot.

na sa sajjati vṛkṣeṣu śastraiś cāpi na hīyate
divyo ratha-varo rājan dṛśyate naiva mānuṣaiḥ
tam āsthāya rathaṁ divyaṁ parjanya-samanisvanam
niryayau puruṣavyāghraḥ pāṇḍavābhyāṁ sahācyutaḥ

The chariot could not be fastened to any tree and could not be destroyed by weapons. Mankind had never seen such an attractive chariot, O King. Mounting the attractive chariot, with the rumbling of clouds, the best of men departed with the two Pāṇḍavas. Mahābhārata

Kṛṣṇa was worshipped by Sahadeva with offerings of many jewels as well as the chariot.

Text 73.32

gatvā te khāṇḍava-prasthaṁ śaṅkhān dadhmur jitārayaḥ
harṣayantaḥ sva-suhṛdo durhṛdāṁ cāsukhāvahāḥ

When they arrived at Indraprastha, the victorious heroes blew their conchs, bringing joy to their well-wishing friends and sorrow to their enemies.

COMMENTARY: They blew their conches situated in their chariots or which appeared just by thinking of them. “Why?” They did this to give bliss to their friends like Yudhiṣṭhira. Moreover, the sound gave sorrow to enemies like Duryodhana.

Text 73.33

tac chrutvā prīta-manasa indraprastha-nivāsinaḥ
menire māgadhaṁ śāntaṁ rājā cāpta-manorathaḥ

The residents of Indraprastha were very pleased to hear that sound, for they understood that now the King of Magadha had been put to rest. King Yudhiṣṭhira felt that his desires were now fulfilled.

COMMENTARY: Hearing the sound of the conches, all the residents were pleased since they were all his devotees. He was the lord of the area. This excludes the residents of Hastinapūra, such as the associates of Duryodhana.

Text 73.34

abhivandyātha rājānaṁ bhīmārjuna-janārdanāḥ
sarvam āśrāvayāṁ cakrur ātmanā yad anuṣṭhitam

Bhīma, Arjuna and Janārdana offered their respects to the King and informed him fully about what they had done.

COMMENTARY: After blowing the conch (atha), without much time elapsing, since they arrived quickly, they offered respects to the king, since the king came to meet them. Kṛṣṇa offered respects last out of modesty. Out of affection, he sent Arjuna first. Also, he stayed behind because he was very shy to have assisted in killing Jarāsandha, since he was the crest jewel of good conduct. He was the killer of the wicked (janārdanaḥ). They informed Yudhiṣṭhira what they had all done (ātmanā), since telling what they themselves did was not proper, and because of the bliss arising from their prema. They described the skill of the others.

Text 73.35

niśamya dharma-rājas tat keśavenānukampitam
ānandāśru-kalāṁ muñcan premṇā novāca kiñcana

Upon hearing their account of the great favor Keśava had mercifully shown him, King Dharmarāja shed tears of ecstasy. He felt such love that he could not say anything.

COMMENTARY: He had been shown mercy by Kṛṣṇa who stood there with his weapons (keśavena). Yudhiṣṭhira shed blissful tears. Because of his choked throat or because it was not proper, he could not speak since he had prema, since he was the best in terms of offering dharma to the Lord (dharma-rājaḥ).

Chapter Seventy-four
The Deliverance of Śiśupāla at the Rājasūya Sacrifice

Text 74.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ yudhiṣṭhiro rājā jarāsandha-vadhaṁ vibhoḥ
kṛṣṇasya cānubhāvaṁ taṁ śrutvā prītas tam abravīt

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus heard of the killing of Jarāsandha, and also of almighty Kṛṣṇa's manifestation of power, King Yudhiṣṭhira addressed the Lord as follows with great pleasure.

COMMENTARY: On another day Yudhiṣṭhira spoke to Kṛṣṇa. Yudhiṣṭhira is called a king since by the killing of Jarāsandha he could rule without opposition. This is understood later. Because of satisfaction with Bhīma on his killing Jarāsandha, Kṛṣṇa had manifested four arms (anubhāvam). Yudhiṣṭhira heard of his killing Jarāsandha and Kṛṣṇa's manifestation of four arms at that time. O master (vibho)! Śukadeva addresses Parīkṣit in this way out of great respect on remembering this mercy of the Lord to Parīkṣit's ancestors. Another version has vibhoḥ: Yudhiṣṭhira heard about the power of Kṛṣṇa who was his master.

Text 74.2

śrī-yudhiṣṭhira uvāca
ye syus trai-lokya-guravaḥ sarve lokā maheśvarāḥ
vahanti durlabhaṁ labdvā śirasaivānuśāsanam

Śrī Yudhiṣṭhira said: All the exalted spiritual masters of the three worlds, together with the inhabitants and rulers of the various planets, accept your command, which is rarely obtained, which comes from your mouth directly or through the Vedas.

COMMENTARY: You control all of them. Having obtained your rare order, they accept it with devotion directly through your mouth, or through the Vedas (śirasā).

Text 74.3

sa bhavān aravindākṣo dīnānām īśa-māninām
dhatte ’nuśāsanaṁ bhūmaṁs tad atyanta-viḍambanam

That you, the lotus-eyed Supreme Lord, accept the orders of wretched fools who presume themselves rulers is a great pretence on your part, O all-pervading one.

COMMENTARY: You protect or accept with reverence the orders of us who are worthless or suffer greatly and consider ourselves controllers. O lotus-eyed Lord! He calls out with prema on realizing Kṛṣṇa’s compassion, beauty and sweetness. O Lord with continual powers (bhumān)! He calls out to nourish his praise of Kṛṣṇa. We consider your accepting our orders to be an imitation, the laughing stock of the people, since you should not do this. Or, it is not proper to do at all.

Text 74.4

na hy ekasyādvitīyasya brahmaṇaḥ paramātmanaḥ
karmabhir vardhate tejo hrasate ca yathā raveḥ

But of course, the power of the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Soul, the primeval one without a second, is neither increased nor diminished by his activities, any more than the sun’s power is by its movements.

COMMENTARY: These actions do not affect you. Giving orders or receiving orders does not manifest or make your powers invisible. This statement is suitable for you. That is explained in the verse. Because there is no one except the Lord, it is impossible for the Lord as Brahman to take others’ orders. Because there is nothing except the Lord’s aṁśas and śaktis, it is impossible for him to give orders to anyone else. There is no necessity of his ordering his aṁśas or śaktis since they operate simply by his desire. Thus giving orders and taking orders is impossible for Brahman. This is what māyā means in Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentary. This is because you are Paramātmā, the soul of all beings. Since it is not proper to be deceptive with devotees, you are most merciful, making the impossible possible, by your will alone. Your powers do not increase or decrease, but simply appear or disappear. This is like the rising and setting of the sun.

Text 74.5

na vai te 'jita bhaktānāṁ mamāham iti mādhava
tvaṁ taveti ca nānā-dhīḥ paśūnām iva vaikṛtī

O unconquerable Mādhava, even your devotees make no distinctions of "I" and "mine," "you" and "yours," for this is the perverted mentality of animals.

COMMENTARY: Your devotees make no distinctions because of their gentle natures. Animals have intelligence which is a distortion from the qualities of the pure svarūpa. This produces the material body. Another version has vaikṛtā. These qualities are certain not present in the Lord. O Lord, you are not controlled by the power of māyā (ajita). O husband of the supreme svarūpa-śakti (mādhava)!

Or, this action is not for yourself, the enjoyer of sacrifices, since you never lack anything and your devotees have no false identity. Then this verse explains. Therefore the cause of your actions is mercy alone and our bhakti.

Text 74.6

śrī-śuka uvāca
ity uktvā yajñiye kale vavre yuktān sa ṛtvijaḥ
kṛṣṇānumoditaḥ pārtho brāhmaṇān brahma-vādinaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having said this, King Yudhiṣṭhira waited until the proper time for the sacrifice was at hand. Then with Lord Kṛṣṇa's permission he selected suitable priests, all expert authorities on the Vedas, to execute the sacrifice.

COMMENTARY: Determining the auspicious time for the sacrifice, having made his request, he selected priests. Brahma-vādinaḥ means "dedicated to studying the Vedas."

Text 74.7–9

dvaipāyano bharadvājaḥ sumantur gotamo 'sitaḥ
vasiṣṭhaś cyavanaḥ kaṇvo maitreyaḥ kavaṣas tritaḥ
viśvāmitro vāmadevaḥ sumatir jaiminiḥ kratuḥ
pailaḥ parāśaro gargo vaiśampāyana eva ca

atharvā kaśyapo dhaumyo rāmo bhārgava āsuriḥ
vītihotro madhucchandā vīraseno 'kṛtavraṇaḥ

He selected Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana, Bharadvāja, Sumantu, Gotama and Asita, along with Vasiṣṭha, Cyavana, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Kavaṣa and Trita. He also selected Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Sumati, Jaimini, Kratu, Paila and Parāśara, as well as Garga, Vaiśampāyana, Atharvā, Kaśyapa, Dhaumya, Rāma of the Bhārgavas, Āsuri, Vītihotra, Madhucchandā, Vīrasena and Akṛtavraṇa.

COMMENTARY: He chose these sages because they were the most prominent. He chose no others (eva). The word ca indicates the whole group. Dvaipāyana (Vyāsa) was selected as the brahmā[1] according to Mahābhārata. Brahmatvam akarot tatra satyavatī-sutaḥ: Vyāsa was made the brahmā priest.

Text 74.10–11

upahūtās tathā cānye droṇa-bhīṣma-kṛpādayaḥ
dhṛtarāṣṭraḥ saha-suto viduraś ca mahā-matiḥ
brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyā vaiśyāḥ śūdrā yajña-didṛkṣavaḥ
tatreyuḥ sarva-rājāno rājñāṁ prakṛtayo nṛpa

O King, others who were invited included Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Kṛpa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra with his sons, the wise Vidura, and many other brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras, all eager to witness the sacrifice. Indeed, all the kings came there with their entourages.

COMMENTARY: Sending Nakula to Hastināpura, as approved by Kṛṣṇa, he invited other sages such as Droṇa. Others invited were Bāhlīka and Somadatta. Vidura was a knower of all dharma concerning this world and the next (mahāmatiḥ). Tatra vyayakaraś cāsīd viduraḥ sarva-dharma-vit: Vidura, the knower of dharma, was the dispenser of funds. Mahābhārata 2.32.8

āmantrayadhvaṁ rājyeṣu brāhmanān kṣatiryān api
viśaś ca mānyān śūdrāś ca sarvān ānayateti ca

On the order of Yudhiṣṭḥira, Sahadeva said to the messengers "Invite brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas also. Bring respectable vaiśyas and śūdras." Mahābhārata 2.30.41

Text 74.12

tatas te deva-yajanaṁ brāhmaṇāḥ svarṇa-lāṅgalaiḥ
kṛṣṭvā tatra yathāmnāyaṁ dīkṣayāṁ cakrire nṛpam

The brāhmaṇa priests then plowed the sacrificial ground with golden plowshares and initiated King Yudhiṣṭhira for the sacrifice in accordance with the traditions set down by standard authorities.

COMMENTARY: According to Vedic rules, the priests plowed the ground and initiated Yudhiṣṭhira.

Text 74.13–15

haimāḥ kilopakaraṇā varuṇasya yathā purā
indrādayo loka-pālā viriñci-bhava-saṁyutāḥ
sa-gaṇāḥ siddha-gandharvā vidyādhara-mahoragāḥ
munayo yakṣa-rakṣāṁsi khaga-kinnara-cāraṇāḥ
rājānaś ca samāhūtā rāja-patnyaś ca sarvaśaḥ
rājasūyaṁ samīyuḥ sma rājñaḥ pāṇḍu-sutasya vai
menire kṛṣṇa-bhaktasya sūpapannam avismitāḥ

The utensils used in the sacrifice were made of gold, just as in the ancient rājasūya performed by Varuṇa. Indra, Brahmā, Śiva and many other planetary rulers; the Siddhas and Gandharvas with their entourage; the Vidyādharas; great serpents; sages; Yakṣas; Rākṣasas; celestial birds; Kinnaras; Cāraṇas; and earthly kings—all were invited, and they came from every direction to the sacrifice of King Yudhiṣṭhira. They were not in the least astonished to see the splendor of the sacrifice, since it was quite appropriate for a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: The vessels were made of gold. One should not doubt this (kila). Brahmā and Śiva were the chief devatās present. Sa-gaṇāḥ refers to Garuḍa and other Vaikuṇṭha associates. The sages were ātmārāmas like the Kumāras. The birds were the sons of Garuḍa. Yudhiṣṭhira is called the son of Pāṇḍu because as his son he spread Pāṇḍu's fame. They did not consider the sacrifice astonishing since Yudhiṣṭhira was a devotee of Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa.

Text 74.16

ayājayan mahā-rājaṁ yājakā deva-varcasaḥ
rājasūyena vidhi-vat pracetasam ivāmarāḥ

The priests, as powerful as gods, performed the rājasūya sacrifice for King Yudhiṣṭhira in accordance with the Vedic injunctions, just as the devatās had previously performed it for Varuṇa.

COMMENTARY: The priests such as Vyāsa had more power than the devatās. They performed it just as the ancient sages among devatās (amarāḥ) performed it for Varuṇa. Just as it was performed elsewhere, it was performed here. Its main elements are shown in brief.

Text 74.17

sūtye 'hany avanī-pālo yājakān sadasas-patīn
apūjayan mahā-bhāgān yathā-vat su-samāhitaḥ

On the day of extracting the soma juice, King Yudhiṣṭhira properly and very attentively worshiped the priests and the most exalted personalities of the assembly.

COMMENTARY: With faith he worshipped the best members of the assembly as appropriate to their status because they were very pure (mahābhāgān), since he was the protector of the earth, having conquered the directions.

Text 74.18

sadasyāgryārhaṇārhaṁ vai vimṛśantaḥ sabhā-sadaḥ
nādhyagacchann anaikāntyāt sahadevas tadābravīt

The members of the assembly then pondered over who among them should be worshiped first with arghya, but since there were many personalities qualified for this honor, they were unable to decide. Finally Sahadeva spoke up.

COMMENTARY: Though they were most intelligent and considered carefully they could not decide on who should be worshipped first, since there were many great persons present. Foolish people had many doubts in their minds and could not decide. With persons like Śiśupāla in the assembly, the wise people had disagreements because of various opinionsŚśā. Kṛṣṇa had the desire to wash everyone's feet. Sahadeva then spoke. Later it is

mentioned that Sahadeva worshipped the guests (SB 10.75.4). Thus he spoke up because of qualification, and also because of devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

Text 74.19

arhati hy acyutaḥ śraiṣṭhyaṁ bhagavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ
eṣa vai devatāḥ sarvā deśa-kāla-dhanādayaḥ

[Sahadeva said:] Certainly it is Acyuta, the Supreme Lord and chief of the Yādavas, who deserves the highest position. In truth, he himself comprises all the devatās worshiped in sacrifice, along with such aspects of the worship as the sacred place, the time and the paraphernalia.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa alone (eva) deserves the highest position, since he is always full of all qualities (acyutaḥ). He then shows why. He is full of all powers innately and moreover is the master of the devotees who are also most worthy of worship. Or, he is the Lord of the Yādavas, Svayam Bhagavān. He who is most famous (eṣaḥ) is the total of all devatās, place, time and articles in sacrifices by his śakti. Bhīṣma and others also designated Kṛṣṇa as the first to be worshipped. This is mentioned in Sabhā-parva of Mahābhārata. Bhīṣma also explains the procedure for selection in other circumstances:

ācāryam ṛtvijaṁ caiva saṁyuktaṁ ca yudhiṣṭhira
snātakaṁ ca priyaṁ cāhuḥ ṣaḍ arghyārhān nṛpaṁ tathā

Listen, O Yudhiṣṭhra, the preceptor, the sacrificial priest, the relative, the snataka, the friend, and the king are the six that deserve arghya.

When Svayam Bhagavān is personally present, these considerations are not taken first. (Later Bhīṣma says that Kṛṣṇa is most worthy of worship.)

Text 74.20–21

yad-ātmakam idaṁ viśvaṁ kratavaś ca yad-ātmakāḥ
agnir āhutayo mantra sāṅkhyaṁ yogaś ca yat-paraḥ
eka evādvitīyo 'sāv aitad-ātmyam idaṁ jagat
ātmanātmāśrayaḥ sabhyāḥ sṛjaty avati hanty ajaḥ

This entire universe is founded upon him, as are the great sacrificial performances, with their sacred fires, oblations and mantras. Sāṅkhya and yoga have him as their goal. He is one without a second. O assembly

members, that unborn Lord, relying solely on himself, creates, maintains and destroys this cosmos by his personal energies, and thus the existence of this universe depends on him alone.

COMMENTARY: The reason for Kṛṣṇa being everything is given. The source of unlimited universes is Kṛṣṇa (yad ātmakam), just as the sun is the source of rays. He is the source of sacrifice and its limbs—fire, oblations and mantras. The procedures for liberation—Sāṅkhya and yoga—are for attaining him. He gives shelter to these processes (yat-paraḥ). The word ekaḥ indicates rejection of anything equal to him and the word advitīyaḥ indicates rejection of anything other than him. The word eva indicates anything else is impossible. Thus everything is one with him (etad-ātmyam). That is illustrated in the last line. He creates, maintains and destroys by śaktis derived from his svarūpa (ātmanā). Therefore, he is not dependent on anything else (ajaḥ). The word ekaḥ can also describe his oneness with the universe.

Text 74.22

vividhānīha karmāṇi janayan yad-avekṣayā
īhate yad ayaṁ sarvaḥ śreyo dharmādi-lakṣaṇam

He creates the many activities of this world, and thus by his grace the whole world endeavors for the ideals of dharma, etc.

COMMENTARY: By his mercy alone, all activities of everyone and their results are undertaken and achieved. Therefore he should be worshipped first. He creates various actions in this world (iha). Ādi indicates artha, kāma and mokṣa. By his mercy, the world endeavors for dharma, artha, kāma, and mokṣa. Or, ultimately for him (avekṣayā), the world endeavors for these goals. Tam etam ātmānaṁ vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividiṣanti yajñena dānena tapasānāśakena: they desire to know him by the words of the Vedas, by sacrifice, charity, austerity and fasting. (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad)

Text 74.23

tasmāt kṛṣṇāya mahate dīyatāṁ paramārhaṇam
evaṁ cet sarva-bhūtānām ātmanaś cārhaṇaṁ bhavet

Therefore we should give the highest honor to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. If we do so, we will be honoring all living beings and also our own selves.

COMMENTARY: He concludes in this verse. He is all beings or the best of all (mahate). No one will have any objection.

Text 74.24

sarva-bhūtātma-bhūtāya kṛṣṇāyānanya-darśine
deyaṁ śāntāya pūrṇāya dattasyānantyam icchatā

Anyone who wishes the honor he gives to be reciprocated infinitely should honor Kṛṣṇa, the perfectly peaceful and perfectly complete soul of all beings, the Supreme Lord, who views nothing as separate from himself.

COMMENTARY: "Then what happens?" With longing he then speaks further. He is the soul of all beings. By his nature he is seen as one alone. Because he has knowledge he is peaceful. He is perfect because of no transformations in his self. The quality of his being the object of charity is shown. Or though he is the soul of all beings, he is attached to seeing his devotees (ananya-darśinaḥ). He is without material desires (śāntāya) and perfect. In this way his very astonishing qualities are shown. One who desires unlimited reciprocation should honor him.

Text 74.25

ity uktvā sahadevo 'bhūt tūṣṇīṁ kṛṣṇānubhāva-vit
tac chrutvā tuṣṭuvuḥ sarve sādhu sādhv iti sattamāḥ

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Having said this, Sahadeva, who understood Kṛṣṇa's powers, fell silent. And having heard his words, all the saintly persons present congratulated him, exclaiming "Excellent! Excellent!"

COMMENTARY: He became silent since he understood Kṛṣṇa's powers. Because of Sahadeva's great devotion, and waiting for some cause for talking, they had remained silent previously. The brāhmaṇas (sattamaḥ) then praised him. This is understood from the next verse

Text 74.26

śrutvā dvijeritaṁ raja jñātvā hārdaṁ sabhā-sadām
samarhayad dhṛṣīkeśaṁ prītaḥ praṇaya-vihvalaḥ

The king was delighted to hear this pronouncement of the brāhmaṇas, from which he understood the mood of the entire assembly. Overwhelmed with love, he fully worshiped Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses.

COMMENTARY: Hearing what the brāhmaṇas or the three upper classes (dvija) said, the king understood the agreement (hārdam) of the others in the assembly. Or he understood the affection (hārdam) for Kṛṣṇa. He was pleased since his desires were fulfilled. Overwhelmed with love, he worshipped Kṛṣṇa completely. Kṛṣṇa had inspired the others as antaryāmī (hṛṣikeṣam) in order to please the king. Or even though overcome with prema, he worshipped Kṛṣṇa properly since Kṛṣṇa mercifully made his senses operate properly.

Text 74.27–28

tat-pādāv avanijyāpaḥ śirasā loka-pāvanīḥ
sa-bhāryaḥ sānujāmātyaḥ sa-kuṭumbo vahan mudā
vāsobhiḥ pīta-kauṣeyair bhūṣaṇaiś ca mahā-dhanaiḥ
arhayitvāśru-pūrṇākṣo nāśakat samavekṣitum

After bathing Kṛṣṇa's feet, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira joyfully sprinkled the water upon his own head, and then upon the heads of his wife, brothers, other family members and ministers. That water purifies the whole world. As he honored the Lord with presentations of yellow silken garments and precious jeweled ornaments, the king's tear-filled eyes prevented him from looking directly at the Lord.

COMMENTARY: The worship is described in two verses. Carrying the water on his head shows his intense devotion. He did this because the water in the form of Gaṅgā was purifying for the worlds. Moreover, the water was capable of purifying previous persons and the citizens as well. His wife Draupadī and their sons and other family members also took the water on their heads. The list is from closest situated to furthest situated: wife, brothers, ministers, other family members. The wife was closest since she offered the water for washing Kṛṣṇa's feet. In joy he offered water on their

heads and with his wife he joyfully offered Kṛṣṇa cloth and other items. He worshipped him with priceless cloth, priceless silk and priceless ornaments (mahā-dhanaiḥ). Or mahā-dhanaiḥ can mean priceless jewels. He was not able to see Kṛṣṇa clearly because his eyes were filled with tears of bliss. But because he desired to see him, he was able to see him slightly due to his prema.

Text 74.29

itthaṁ sabhājitaṁ vīkṣya sarve prāñjalayo janāḥ
namo jayeti nemus taṁ nipetuḥ puṣpa-vṛṣṭayaḥ

When they saw Kṛṣṇa thus honored, nearly all who were present joined their palms reverentially, exclaiming "Obeisances to you! All victory to you!" and then bowed down to him. Flowers rained down from above.

COMMENTARY: This verse indicates that all who saw this loving worship also developed prema. Some said, "I offer respects" and some said, "Victory!" Or everyone in joy said "I offer respects. Victory!" From the sky flowers fell, spreading everywhere in the assembly.

Text 74.30

itthaṁ niśamya damaghoṣa-sutaḥ sva-pīṭhād
utthāya kṛṣṇa-guṇa-varṇana-jāta-manyuḥ
utkṣipya bāhum idam āha sadasy amarṣī
saṁśrāvayan bhagavate paruṣāṇy abhītaḥ

The intolerant son of Damaghoṣa became infuriated upon hearing the glorification of Kṛṣṇa's qualities. He stood up from his seat and, angrily waving his arms, fearlessly spoke to the entire assembly the following harsh words against the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY: Though Śiśupāla and Dantavakra did not have demonic natures internally, since they were Jaya and Vijaya, externally they imitated demons. That is shown in Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary on the killing of Hiraṇyakṣa. That is sensible, since otherwise this pastime would be contrary to the Lord's intention of giving happiness to the devotees and himself. Since they worshipped the Lord internally their inimical words actually had another meaning when they spoke (by their intention). When

other demons speak about the Lord, however, by the inspiration of Sarasvatī (not by their intention) their words have another meaning. Here Śiśupāla speaks clearly in order to nourish the fighting rasa.

After hearing Sahadeva speak, and hearing all the words until the final offering of respects and cries of victory for Kṛṣṇa, Śiśupāla became angry. He was eviler than his father (damaghoṣa-sutaḥ). In Hari-vaṁśa this is made clear in the episode of his advice to burn Gomanta mountain. He was angry at the words praising Kṛṣṇa, what to speak of the worship of Kṛṣṇa, since he was intolerant due to his envy (amarṣī). Or he began to lament (manyuḥ) and then became angry (amarṣī). He rose from his seat, and raising his right arm, made everyone listen to his loud words at close range (sam-śravayan), since he was very impudent (abhītaḥ).

Text 74.31

īśo duratyayaḥ kāla iti satyavatī srutiḥ
vṛddhānām api yad buddhir bāla-vākyair vibhidyate

[Śiśupāla said:] The statement of the Vedas that time is the unavoidable controller of all has indeed been proven true, since the intelligence of wise elders has now become diverted by the words of a mere boy.

COMMENTARY: To conciliate the assembly, he first spoke in order to give his own interpretation to Sahadeva's words and in order to scold. Time is capable of doing the impossible (īśaḥ) and it is not possible to avoid (duratyayaḥ). The Vedas or tradition speaks the truth. "Why?" Something astonishing has happened: because of time, the intelligence of elders has been diverted by a child's words.

Text 74.32

yūyaṁ pātra-vidāṁ śreṣṭhā mā mandhvaṁ bāla-bhāṣītam
sadasas-patayaḥ sarve kṛṣṇo yat sammato 'rhaṇe

O leaders of the assembly, you know best who is a fit candidate for being honored. Therefore you should not heed the words of a child when he claims that Kṛṣṇa deserves to be worshiped.

COMMENTARY: "Who has such intelligence?" You sages have this intelligence. Do not give regard to the words of Sahadeva, a boy. Now you

should reverse the worship since you are the best knowers of who is qualified. This boy is not qualified. From his words, Kṛṣṇa had been accepted for worship. Śiśupāla uses the name Kṛṣṇa directly to criticize him. The real meaning of his words is "The Vedas are true, but do not give regard to my foolish (bālasya) words since you know who is qualified for worship, since Kṛṣṇa, para-brahman in human form, is accepted for worship."

Text 74.33–34

tapo-vidyā-vrata-dharān jñāna-vidhvasta-kalmaṣān
paramaṛṣīn brahma-niṣṭhāl̐ loka-pālaiś ca pūjitān
sadas-patīn atikramya gopālaḥ kula-pāṁsanaḥ
yathā kākaḥ puroḍāśaṁ saparyāṁ katham arhati

How can you pass over the most exalted members of this assembly—topmost sages dedicated to the Absolute Truth endowed with powers of austerity, divine insight and strict adherence to severe vows, sanctified by knowledge and worshiped even by the rulers of the universe? How does this cowherd boy, the disgrace of his family, deserve your worship, any more than a crow deserves to eat the sacred puroḍāśa rice cake?

COMMENTARY: In the absence of persons qualified for worship maybe you could do this, but how can you choose him when so many qualified persons are present? In two verses he explains his position. You have overlooked great sages who have performed sva-dharma (tapo), possess knowledge and have done the fourteen vratas. He has spoiled the name of his family by killing his uncle (kula-pāṁsanaḥ).

The real meaning is as follows. The first part is the same. (He surpasses all the qualified person in the assembly.) Kṛṣṇa is "he who vanquishes those who speak the opposite of the Vedas (kulapa amśam)." He is without material misery and material happiness (a-ka-akaḥ). Thus, he does not deserve mere cakes but everything. He does not just deserve worship, but full surrender. Gopālāḥ means a member of a cowherd family by material vision. But in his words there is a great glorification because those words describe the Lord's non-material pastimes, since Gopāla is the presiding deity of great mantras mentioned in the Vedic scriptures. From the

external viewpoint also he is the protector (pālaḥ) of the Vedas and earth (go).

Text 74.35

varṇāśrama-kulāpetaḥ sarva-dharma-bahiṣ-kṛtaḥ
svaira-vartī guṇair hīnaḥ saparyāṁ katham arhati

How does one who follows no varṇāśrama-dharma nor family ethics, who has been excluded from all dharmas, who behaves whimsically, and who has no good qualities—how does such a person deserve to be worshiped?

COMMENTARY: "What is the fault if Kṛṣṇa disguised himself as a cowherd in order to fool him and kill him, since Śiśupāla was evil?" The external meaning is clear. The real meaning is that from the point of view of Brahman or the Lord, these rules would not apply. He is beyond all names and families. Because he is beyond all this, he is free to reject it all and act independently. What use is insignificant worship meant for jīvas? From the point of view of his human pastimes, if he breaks the rules of varṇāśrama, why should he be worshipped by devatās and sages?

Text 74.36

yayātinaiṣāṁ hi kulaṁ śaptaṁ sadbhir bahiṣ-kṛtam
vṛthā-pāna-rataṁ śaśvat saparyāṁ katham arhati

Yayāti cursed the dynasty of these Yādavas, and ever since then they have been ostracized by honest men and addicted to liquor. How, then, does the family deserve to be worshiped?

COMMENTARY: In criticizing Kṛṣṇa he also criticizes all the Yadus in two verses (36-37). Because the family was cursed by Yayāti they have been ostracized by the righteous. The real meaning is as follows. The family has delivered (bahiṣkṛtam) from the curse by sacrifices performed by the great sages. The family is absorbed in protecting the earth (pāna-ratam). Therefore, why is worshipping the Yadus useless?

Text 74.37

brahmarṣi-sevitān deśān hitvaite 'brahma-varcasam
samudraṁ durgam āśritya bādhante dasyavaḥ prajāḥ

These Yādavas have abandoned the holy lands inhabited by saintly sages and have instead taken shelter of a fortress in the sea, a place where no brahminical principles are observed. There, just like thieves, they harass their subjects.

COMMENTARY: The Yādavas have taken shelter in the sea, devoid of the Vedas and act like thieves, plundering all properties. The real meaning is as follows. Someone may say, "Taking shelter of the sea, they are like Rāvaṇa." In response, the verse says that Rāvaṇa and others, not having come from Manu's line, are thieving descendants (dasyavaḥ prajāḥ). Giving up lands served by brahmarṣis, taking shelter of the sea, Rāvaṇa and his descendents stop actions of the brāhmaṇas or the Vedas (brahma-varcasam). But why would the Yādavas stop the actions? They protect such activities.

Text 74.38

evam-ādīny abhadrāṇi babhāṣe naṣṭa-maṅgalaḥ
novāca kiñcid bhagavān yathā siṁhaḥ śivā-rutam

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Bereft of all good fortune, Śiśupāla spoke these and other insults. But the Supreme Lord said nothing, just as a lion ignores a jackal's cry.

COMMENTARY: Śiśupāla was more or less dead (naṣṭa-maṅgalaḥ). The phrase can also be taken as anaṣṭa-maṅgalaḥ: he had some profound auspiciousness—he was actually an associate of the Lord. He was now about to be reinstated. In the Seventh Canto Nārada explains to Yudhiṣṭhira that his sins were destroyed by Kṛṣṇa's cakra (SB 7.1.46) His sins were destroyed but he was not destroyed. The Third Canto describes Hiraṇyakṣa's anger at the Lord. (SB 3.19.9) But it was explained that he did not have actual anger. His chasing the Lord described in SB 3.18.9 is only imitation anger. The Lord acted in order to dispel the devatās' fear of the demon's words. Though it is not mentioned, the Lord had no cause for anger. Therefore the bad words of these two actually indicate another meaning, but to protect the pastime desired by the Lord, he made a show

with words that have another meaning. The negative meaning is taken for the words spoken by other demons however (who were not associates of the Lord) because of their demonic nature, but the actual (positive) meaning was created by Sarasvatī (not by their intention). Externally, Śiśupāla spoke inauspicious words (abhadrāṇī). But the other meaning is "He spoke words of which nothing could be more auspicious." The Lord did not speak. Externally he acted as a great person, like a lion ignoring a jackal. The real meaning is that the Lord was silent because he has a profound nature. Similarly, Narasiṁha is praised by Śiva.

Text 74.39

bhagavan-nindanaṁ śrutvā duḥsahaṁ tat sabhā-sadaḥ
karṇau pidhāya nirjagmuḥ śapantaś cedi-paṁ ruṣā

Upon hearing such intolerable blasphemy of the Lord, several members of the assembly covered their ears and walked out, angrily cursing the King of Cedi.

COMMENTARY: Though some knew the real meaning of the words, they assumed the appearance of being intolerant, following along with the others. They cursed Śiśupāla, shouting, "Your prāṇas should immediately leave your body" since they, being saintly, could not tolerate the words. Thus they left.

Text 74.40

nindāṁ bhagavataḥ śṛṇvaṁs tat-parasya janasya vā
tato nāpaiti yaḥ so 'pi yāty adhaḥ sukṛtāc cyutaḥ

Anyone who fails to immediately leave the place where he hears criticism of the Supreme Lord or his faithful devotee will certainly fall down, bereft of his pious credit.

COMMENTARY: They left in order to avoid a bad future for themselves. One who hears criticism of the Lord or his devotee falls to the greatest hell. With the destruction of his pious credits or devotion, he can never attain a fortunate destination.

Text 74.41

tataḥ pāṇḍu-sutāḥ kruddhā matsya-kaikaya-sṛñjayāḥ
udāyudhāḥ samuttasthuḥ śiśupāla-jighāṁsavaḥ

Then the sons of Pāṇḍu became furious, and together with the warriors of the Matsya, Kaikaya and Sṛñjaya clans, they rose up from their seats with weapons poised, ready to kill Śiśupāla.

COMMENTARY: Unable to act, some left according to the rule:

karṇau pidhāya nirayād yad akalpa īśe
dharmāvitary asṛṇibhir nṛbhir asyamāne
chindyāt prasahya ruśatīm asatīṁ prabhuś cej
jihvām asūn api tato visṛjet sa dharmaḥ

If one hears an irresponsible person blaspheme the master and controller of dharma, one should block his ears and go away if unable to punish him. But if one is able to kill, then one should by force cut out the blasphemer's tongue and kill the offender, and after that one should give up his own life. SB 4.4.17

Now the action of those who could act is described. They jumped up. The Yādavas, following the Lord, did not rise nor did they say anything.

Text 74.42

tataś caidyas tv asambhrānto jagṛhe khaḍga-carmaṇī
bhartsayan kṛṣṇa-pakṣīyān rājñaḥ sadasi bhārata

Undaunted, Śiśupāla then took up his sword and shield in the midst of all the assembled kings, O Bhārata, and hurled insults at those who sided with Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: Others who sided with Śiśupāla however became confused. This is indicated by the word tu.

Text 74.43

tāvad utthāya bhagavān svān nivārya svayaṁ ruṣā
śiraḥ kṣurānta-cakreṇa jahāra patato ripoḥ

At that point the Supreme Lord stood up and checked his devotees. He then angrily sent forth his razor-sharp disc and severed the head of his enemy as he was attacking.

COMMENTARY: At this time (tāvat), after three births, freeing Śiśupāla from the curse of the sages, the Lord found it now suitable to kill him with his own hand as he had done in previously births in order that the demon could attain his form as an associate in Vaikuṇṭha. The Pāṇḍavas had risen first to kill Śiśupāla because Kṛṣṇa was Bhagavān, full of unlimited qualities such as affection for his devotees and knowledge. Śiśupāla had suddenly come face to face with him.

Text 74.44

śabdaḥ kolāhalo 'thāsīc chiśupāle hate mahān
tasyānuyāyino bhūpā dudruvur jīvitaiṣiṇaḥ

When Śiśupāla was thus killed, a great roar arose from the crowd. Taking advantage of that disturbance, the few kings who were supporters of Śiśupāla quickly left the assembly out of fear for their lives.

COMMENTARY: There was a huge uproar. Instead of atha sometimes api is seen, indicating the whole. Some shouted loudly "Victory! Victory!"

Text 74.45

caidya-dehotthitaṁ jyotir vāsudevam upāviśat
paśyatāṁ sarva-bhūtānām ulkeva bhuvi khāc cyutā

An effulgent light rose from Śiśupāla's body and, as everyone watched, entered Kṛṣṇa just like a meteor falling from the sky to the earth.

COMMENTARY: There was a light. This was merged with his form (which could thus not be seen), since his form as an associate is actually indestructible.

Text 74.46

janma-trayānuguṇita-vaira-saṁrabdhayā dhiyā
dhyāyaṁs tan-mayatāṁ yāto bhāvo hi bhava-kāraṇam

Obsessed with hatred of Kṛṣṇa throughout three lifetimes, Śiśupāla attained the Lord's nature for one's consciousness determines one's future birth.

COMMENTARY: Entering the Lord, Śiśupāla attained a form like the Lord's. The example of the insect trapped by the wasp should be remembered.

“By what type of intelligence did he make this happen?” He was absorbed in hatred for three lifetimes. The impressions of his situation as an associate of the Lord (bhāvaḥ) gave this result. This remained deep within him, since the external consciousness as a demon was a superimposition. The details of Dantavakra are given by Śrīdhara Svāmī. Though he entered the Lord—since the Lord’s associates merge with him when he appears in this world—he would attain his spiritual body at the proper time. At the end of the prakaṭa pastimes, the aṁśas depart for their abodes. He had attained an external form in order to become the Lord’s associate.

vairānubandha-tīvreṇa dhyānenācyuta-sātmatām
nītau punar hareḥ pārśvaṁ jagmatur viṣṇu-pārṣadau

These two associates of Lord Viṣṇu—Jaya and Vijaya—maintained a feeling of enmity for a very long time. Because of always thinking of Kṛṣṇa in this way, they regained the shelter of the Lord. SB 7.1.47

Text 74.47

ṛtvigbhyaḥ sa-sadasyebhyo dakṣināṁ vipulām adāt
sarvān sampūjya vidhi-vac cakre ’vabhṛtham eka-rāṭ

Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira gave generous gifts to the sacrificial priests and the members of the assembly, properly honoring them all in the manner prescribed by the Vedas. He then took the avabhṛtha bath.

COMMENTARY: With the destruction of all obstacles the sacrifice was completed nicely. The king took the avabhṛtha bath, a concluding act for the sacrifice. Yudhiṣṭhira had now attained his kingdom. He was the sole ruler (eka-rāṭ).

Text 74.48

sādhayitvā kratuḥ rājñaḥ kṛṣṇo yogeśvareśvaraḥ
uvāsa katicin māsān suhṛdbhir abhiyācitaḥ

Thus Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of all masters of mystic yoga, saw to the successful execution of this great sacrifice on behalf of King Yudhiṣṭhira. Afterwards, the Lord stayed with his intimate friends for a few months at their earnest request.

COMMENTARY: Though Kṛṣṇa was the controller of the lords of devatās, requested by his friends and controlled by their prayers, he stayed. Or because he is the master of all masters of yoga, able to expand himself unlimitedly (SB 10.69.2), he gave bliss by his personal form to all types of friends.

Text 74.49

tato 'nujñāpya rājānam anicchantam apīśvaraḥ
yayau sa-bhāryaḥ sāmātyaḥ sva-puraṁ devakī-sutaḥ

Then the Lord, the son of Devakī, took the reluctant permission of the king and returned to his capital with his wives and ministers.

COMMENTARY: Though he was supremely independent (īśvaraḥ), he took permission to leave. He went to give happiness to his mother, father and others (devakī-sutaḥ).

Text 74.50

varṇitaṁ tad upākhyānaṁ mayā te bahu-vistaram
vaikuṇṭha-vāsinor janma vipra-śāpāt punaḥ punaḥ

I have already described to you in detail the history of the two residents of Vaikuṇṭha who had to undergo repeated births in the material world because of being cursed by brāhmaṇas.

COMMENTARY: This verse concludes the story while indicating that Vaiṣṇavas should not disrespect brāhmaṇas. In the Seventh Canto Śukadeva told this story in detail (bahu-vistaram modifies upākhāyanam or varṇitam) when Parīkṣit asked. Even though they were inhabitants of Vaikuṇṭha, they had to undergo repeated births in the material world.

Text 74.51

rājasūyāvabhṛthyena snāto rājā yudhiṣṭhiraḥ
brahma-kṣatra-sabhā-madhye śuśubhe sura-rāḍ iva

Purified in the avabhṛthya ritual, which marked the successful completion of the rājasūya sacrifice, King Yudhiṣṭhira shone among the assembled brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas like the King of the devatās himself.

COMMENTARY: Out of enthusiasm the bath is again praised. One should see the Mahābhārata for details of the bathing and hair dressing of Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī performed by the Lord.

Text 74.52

rājñā sabhājitāḥ sarve sura-mānava-khecarāḥ
kṛṣṇaṁ kratuṁ ca śaṁsantaḥ sva-dhāmāni yayur mudā

The devatās, humans and residents of intermediate heavens, all properly honored by the king, happily set off for their respective domains while singing the praises of Kṛṣṇa and the great sacrifice.

COMMENTARY: The devatās like Brahmā, the humans, such as the kings, and the khecaras or siddhas after being honored, returned to their abodes. They sang the praised of Kṛṣṇa:

yad dharma-sūnor bata rājasūye
nirīkṣya dṛk-svastyayanaṁ tri-lokaḥ
kārtsnyena cādyeha gataṁ vidhātur
arvāk-sṛtau kauśalam ity amanyata

At the rājasūya sacrifice of Yudhiṣṭhira, all the people of the universe, seeing the form of the Lord which created auspiciousness in all directions, considered that the skill of the creator in making the most beautiful objects in the recent universe was nullified completely at that time. SB 3.2.13

yan martya-līlaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā gṛhītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
paraṁ padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam

Kṛṣṇa possesses that form suitable for human pastimes to show the full capacity of his yoga-māyā. That form astonishes even the lord of Vaikuṇṭha. It is the pinnacle of auspicious qualities and enhances the beauty of his ornaments. SB 3.2.12

They also praised the sacrifice because it became most remarkable by the presence of the Lord. All the righteous people were pleased whereas the wicked became agitated because of their sins.

Text 74.53

duryodhanam ṛte pāpaṁ kaliṁ kuru-kulāmayam
yo na sehe śrīyaṁ sphītāṁ dṛṣṭvā pāṇḍu-sutasya tām

[All were satisfied] except sinful Duryodhana, the personification of the age of quarrel and the disease of the Kuru dynasty. He could not bear to see the flourishing prosperity of the son of Pāṇḍu.

COMMENTARY: Among the wicked the chief person Duryodhana is described. He did not praise Kṛṣṇa or the sacrifice. Nor did he go home in bliss. Rather he was overcome with lamentation since he was sinful and since he could not tolerate the prosperity of Yudhiṣṭhira. Envy appeared because of competition with a brother and because Yudhiṣṭhira was fixed in dharma.

Text 74.54

ya idaṁ kīrtayed viṣṇoḥ karma caidya-vadhādikam
rāja-mokṣaṁ vitānaṁ ca sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate

One who recites these activities of Kṛṣṇa, including the killing of Śiśupāla, the coronation of Yudhiṣṭhira, the deliverance of the kings and the performance of the Rājasūya sacrifice, is freed from all obstacles to bhakti.

COMMENTARY: Duryodhana and others grieved in spite of seeing Kṛṣṇa directly, because they did not have devotion. All others however become happy since they had bhakti. That is expressed in this verse. Qualification is not necessary. One who recites the killing Śiśupāla by Kṛṣṇa, who spreads through the universe (viṣṇoḥ) by revealing his special glories, is freed of all obstacles to bhakti. Adikam means “and the installation of Yudhiṣṭhira.”

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[1] The brahmā priest is the supervisor of the sacrifice.

Chapter Seventy-five
Duryodhana Humiliated

Text 75.1–2

śrī-rājovāca
ajāta-śatros tam dṛṣṭvā rājasūya-mahodayam
sarve mumudire brahman nṛ-devā ye samāgatāḥ
duryodhanaṁ varjayitvā rājānaḥ sarṣayaḥ surāḥ
iti śrutaṁ no bhagavaṁs tatra kāraṇam ucyatām

Mahārāja Parīkṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, according to what I have heard from you, all the assembled kings, sages and devatās were delighted to see the wonderful festivities of King Yudhiṣṭhira's sacrifice, with the sole exception of Duryodhana. Please tell me why this was so, my lord.

COMMENTARY: Though it was already explained that the cause of Duryodhana's agitation was his sin, he asks again, wanting to know the details while confirming what was said. Yudhiṣṭhira did not hate Duryodhana. The cause of Duryodhana's hatred was that he thought the throne belonged to him. Śukadeva had heard this from the mouth of the Lord through paramparā.

Text 75.3

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca
pitāmahasya te yajñe rājasūye mahātmanaḥ
bāndhavāḥ paricaryāyāṁ tasyāsan prema-bandhanāḥ

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: At the rājasūya sacrifice of your saintly grandfather, his family members, bound by their love for him, engaged themselves in humble services on his behalf.

COMMENTARY: Śukadeva calls Yudhiṣṭhira "grandfather" in order to give Parīkṣit joy. Friends who were bound to Yudhiṣṭhira by affection were there to perform various services at the sacrifice of Yudhiṣṭhira, who had an excellent nature (mahātmanaḥ).

Text 75.4–7

bhīmo mahānasādhyakṣo dhanādhyakṣaḥ suyodhanaḥ
sahadevas tu pūjāyāṁ nakulo dravya-sādhane
guru-śuśrūṣaṇe jiṣṇuḥ kṛṣṇaḥ pādāvanejane
pariveṣaṇe drupada-jā karṇo dāne mahā-manāḥ
yuyudhāno vikarṇaś ca hārdikyo vidurādayaḥ
bāhlīka-putrā bhūry-ādyā ye ca santardanādayaḥ
nirūpitā mahā-yajñe nānā-karmasu te tadā
pravartante sma rājendra rājñaḥ priya-cikīrṣavaḥ

Bhīma supervised the kitchen, Duryodhana looked after the treasury, while Sahadeva respectfully greeted the arriving guests. Nakula procured needed items, Arjuna attended the respectable elders, and Kṛṣṇa washed everyone's feet, while Draupadī served food, and generous Karṇa gave out the gifts. Many others, such as Yuyudhāna; Vikarṇa, Krtavarmā, Vidura, Bhūriśravā and other sons of Bāhlīka; and Santardana, similarly volunteered for various duties during the elaborate sacrifice. They did so because of their eagerness to please Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, O best of kings.

COMMENTARY: Four verses describe their activities. Two verses (4-5) describe the activities of the main persons. Some were engaged as heads of departments while others were engaged individually to do certain tasks, according to their skill and special desire. Thus each is described through the assignment of their service. Arjuna was in charge of serving those who were supporting the Lord. Kṛṣṇa was in charge of washing the feet of the devotees. He was not engaged by Yudhiṣṭhira in doing this. He did this voluntarily out of affection. The second verse mentioned that friends bound by affection served in various capacities. "Since others were too proud to do this, the sacrifice will be faulty without this service. This should not happen to my friend." Thus Kṛṣṇa did this service out of mercy.

Vikarṇa was the brother of Duryodhana. Hārdikya refers to Kṛtavarmā. Ādayaḥ after Vidura means Bhīṣma, Droṇa and others. Duśāsana was also there. Kṛtākṛta-parijñāne bhīṣmadrauṇau mahāmatī: Bhīsma and Droṇa, great minds who knew what to do and not to do, were engaged. (Mahābhārata). The son of Bāhlīka named Somadatta was there.

Somadatta's son was Bhūri. The word ādyā means Bhūriśvavā, another son of Somadatta. Putrā here included grandsons. Santardana refers to Kekaya, son of Śrutikīrti, sister of Kuntī. Ādayaḥ indicates his brothers. Immediately (tadā) they engaged in service.

Text 75.8

ṛtvik-sadasya-bahu-vitsu suhṛttameṣu
sv-iṣṭeṣu sūnṛta-samarhaṇa-dakṣiṇābhiḥ
caidye ca sātvata-pateś caraṇaṁ praviṣṭe
cakrus tatas tv avabhṛtha-snapanaṁ dyu-nadyām

After the priests, the prominent delegates, the greatly learned saints and the king's most intimate well-wishers had all been properly honored with pleasing words, auspicious offerings and various gifts as remuneration, and after the King of Cedi had entered the lotus feet of the Lord of the Sātvatas, the avabhṛtha bath was performed in the divine river.

COMMENTARY: Bahuvitsu refers to brāhmaṇas other than the priests, who had great knowledge. The priests were engaged in giving Yudhiṣṭhira the avabhṛtha bath after (tataḥ) everything was complete, with a contented heart. And also, this occurred after Śiśupāla entered the Lord. Of these two events, the bath is thus emphasized. He bathed in the "divine river" which usually refers to Gaṅgā, with the desire that the city should be related to the Gaṅgā just as it was related to the Yamunā (which actually flows nearer to the city). Mention of the "divine river" lends respect to the family capital city.

Text 75.9

mṛdaṅga-śaṅkha-paṇava-dhundhury-ānaka-gomukhāḥ
vāditrāṇi vicitrāṇi nedur āvabhṛthotsave

During the avabhṛtha celebration, the music of many kinds of instruments resounded, including mṛdaṅgas, conchshells, panavas, dhundhuris, kettledrums and gomukha horns.

COMMENTARY: Dhundhurī is a type of ānaka. Paṭaha is a type dundhubhi.

Text 75.10

nārtakyo nanṛtur hṛṣṭā gāyakā yūthaśo jaguḥ
vīṇā-veṇu-talonnādas teṣāṁ sa divam aspṛśat

Female dancers danced with great joy, and choruses sang, while the loud vibrations of vīnās, flutes and hand cymbals reached all the way to the heavenly regions.

COMMENTARY: Vīṇa refers to the vīṇā shaped like a turtle. Veṇu is a type of drum. Tala is karatāla. The dancers were most prominent.

Text 75.11

citra-dhvaja-patākāgrair ibhendra-syandanārvabhiḥ
sv-alaṅkṛtair bhaṭair bhūpā niryayū rukma-mālinaḥ

All the kings, wearing gold necklaces, then set off. They had flags and banners of various colors and were accompanied by infantrymen and well-adorned soldiers riding lordly elephants, chariots and horses.

COMMENTARY: After describing the festivity of the bath, the preparations for departure are described until verse 16. The kings had golden garlands or their gold crowns appeared like a garland as they lined up.

Text 75.12

yadu-sṛñjaya-kāmboja-kuru-kekaya-kośalāḥ
kampayanto bhuvaṁ sainyair yayamāna-puraḥ-sarāḥ

The massed armies of the Yadus, Sṛñjayas, Kāmbojas, Kurus, Kekayas and Kośalas made the earth tremble as they followed Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, the performer of the sacrifice, in procession.

COMMENTARY: The kings are described. Kāmbhoja refers to King Sudakṣiṇa and others.

Text 75.13

sadasyartvig-dvija-śreṣṭhā brahma-ghoṣeṇa bhūyasā
devarṣi-pitṛ-gandharvās tuṣṭuvuḥ puṣpa-varṣiṇaḥ

The assembly officials, the priests and other excellent brāhmaṇas resoundingly vibrated Vedic mantras, while the devatās, divine sages, Pitṛs and Gandharvas sang praises and rained down flowers.

COMMENTARY: The devatās and sages are also described.

Text 75.14

sv-alaṇkṛtā narā nāryo gandha-srag-bhūṣaṇāmbaraiḥ
vilimpantyo 'bhisiñcantyo vijahrur vividhai rasaiḥ

Men and women, all adorned with sandalwood paste, flower garlands, jewelry and fine clothing, sported by smearing and sprinkling one another with various liquids.

COMMENTARY: The women especially were anointed with ointments. Or everyone was smeared in various manners (vilimpantyaḥ) and sprinkled various liquids.

Text 75.15

taila-gorasa-gandhoda-haridrā-sāndra-kuṅkumaiḥ
pumbhir liptāḥ pralimpantyo vijahrur vāra-yoṣitaḥ

The men smeared the courtesans with plentiful oil, yogurt, perfumed water, turmeric and kuṅkuma powder, and the courtesans playfully smeared the men with the same substances.

COMMENTARY: The women smeared more than the men (pra-limpantyaḥ).

Text 75.16

guptā nṛbhir niragamann upalabdhum etad
devyo yathā divi vimāna-varair nṛ-devyo
tā mātuleya-sakhibhiḥ pariṣicyamānāḥ
sa-vrīḍa-hāsa-vikasad-vadanā virejuḥ

Surrounded by guards, King Yudhiṣṭhira's queens came out on their chariots to see the fun, just as the devatās' wives appeared in the sky in celestial airplanes. As maternal cousins and intimate friends sprinkled the queens with liquids, the ladies' faces bloomed with shy smiles, enhancing the queens' splendid beauty.

COMMENTARY: This verse describes the play suitable for the wives of Yudhiṣṭhira such as Draupadī, and his son's wives, after going to the bank of the Gaṅgā. Draupadī and also the queens such as Rukmiṇī saw the fun. Since Draupadī and others were principal to the sacrifice, the word

mātuleya (maternal uncle's son) refers the husband's cousins, just as "nephew" would refer to nephews on the husband's side. It would be improper to joke with maternal cousins on the wife's side. Of Yudhiṣṭhira's cousins the most famous was Kṛṣṇa. Thus mātuleya here refers to Kṛṣṇa, just as Govardhana is accepted as the most famous among mountains. Hantāyam adrir abalā hari-dāsa-varyah: of all the devotees, this Govardhana Hill is the best! (SB 10.21.18) Kṛṣṇa was the best husband. Others were also husbands such as Bhīma and other friends who were nearby. They were understood to be brothers. The next verse states that the wives of Yudhiṣṭhira squirted water on the brothers of Yudhiṣṭhira (devarān) and their friends. Thus in the eyes of the public it was proper for them to joke with each other. They would not be subject to criticism since their relationship was close.

Text 75.17

tā devarān uta sakhīn siṣicur dṛtībhiḥ
klinnāmbarā vivṛta-gātra-kucoru-madhyāḥ
autsukya-mukta-kavarāc cyavamāna-mālyāḥ
kṣobhaṁ dadhur mala-dhiyāṁ rucirair vihāraiḥ

As the queens squirted water from syringes at their brothers-in-law and other male companions, their own garments became drenched, revealing their arms, breasts, thighs and waists. In their excitement, the flowers fell from their loosened braids. By these charming pastimes they agitated those with contaminated consciousness.

COMMENTARY: The limbs which were drenched are described: breasts, thighs and waists. But being absorbed in spraying water with enthusiasm, their braids came undone and the garlands fell off their braids. Another version has kavarāḥ patanāna-mālyāḥ. Those with contaminated minds like Duryodhana became agitated but not the righteous, what to speak of the husbands and their brothers.

Text 75.18

sa samrāḍ ratham āruḍhaḥ sad-aśvaṁ rukma-mālinam
vyarocata sva-patnībhiḥ kriyābhiḥ kratu-rāḍ iva

The emperor, mounted upon his chariot drawn by excellent horses wearing golden collars, appeared splendid in the company of his wives, just like the brilliant rājasūya sacrifice surrounded by its various rituals.

COMMENTARY: Again the king's going there is described. He left with Draupadī and others.

Text 75.19

patnī-samyājāvabhṛthyaiś caritvā te tam ṛtvijaḥ
ācāntaṁ snāpayāṁ cakrur gaṅgāyāṁ saha kṛṣṇayā

The priests led the king through the execution of the final rituals of patnī-saṁyāja and avabhṛthya. Then they had him and Queen Draupadī sip water for purification and bathe in the Gaṅgā.

COMMENTARY: This verse describes going to the Gaṅgā as part of the avabhṛthya bath. The priests were Vyāsa and others.

Text 75.20

deva-dundubhayo nedur nara-dundubhibhiḥ samam
mumucuḥ puṣpa-varṣāṇi devarṣi-pitṛ-mānavāḥ

The kettledrums of the gods resounded, along with those of human beings. Devatās, sages, forefathers and humans all showered flowers.

COMMENTARY: The devatās, sages, Pitṛs and humans showered flowers. The list is from best (devatās) to lesser beings (humans).

Text 75.21

sasnus tatra tataḥ sarve varṇāśrama-yutā narāḥ
mahā-pātaky api yataḥ sadyo mucyeta kilbiṣāt

All the citizens belonging to the various orders of varṇa and āśrama then bathed in that place, where even the most grievous sinner can immediately be freed from all sinful reactions.

COMMENTARY: After Yudhiṣṭhira bathed, the brāhmaṇas and others bathed, who also were of different āśramas. Those outside the varṇas and āśramas also bathed, but not at the same time. They bathed later. In Viṣṇu Purāṇa it is said that Śatadhanvā became purified after he was born as a peacock by

bathing at this time, since at the avabhṛthya places even the greatest sinner is freed of all sins. What to speak of doing so under the supervision of Yudhiṣṭhira and Vyāsa. What to speak of the avabhṛthya bath taking place in the Gaṅgā. What to speak of having the presence of Kṛṣṇa!

Text 75.22

atha rājāhate kṣaume paridhāya sv-alaṅkṛtaḥ
ṛtvik-sadasya-viprādīn ānarcābharaṇāmbaraiḥ

Next the king put on new silken garments and adorned himself with fine jewelry. He then honored the priests, assembly officials, learned brāhmaṇas and other guests by presenting them with ornaments and clothing.

COMMENTARY: Atha means "after that."

Text 75.23

bandhūñ jñātīn nṛpān mitra-suhṛdo 'nyāṁś ca sarvaśaḥ
abhīkṣnaṁ pūjayām āsa nārāyaṇa-paro nṛpaḥ

In various ways King Yudhiṣṭhira, who had totally dedicated his life to Kṛṣṇa, continuously honored his relatives, his immediate family, the other kings, his friends and well-wishers, and all others present as well.

COMMENTARY: The previous verse mentioned that others were also honored. Now those others are described. He honored intimate friends (bandhūn) like Kṛṣṇa, relatives (jñātīn) like Bhīṣma, other friends (mitra) like Virāṭa, and other relatives (suhṛdaḥ) like Drupāda. They were all kings (nṛpān). "Others" indicates neutral kings. The list is from most intimate to least intimate. He worshipped them in that order.

nārāyaṇas tvaṁ na hi sarva-dehinām
ātmāsy adhīśākhila-loka-sākṣī
nārāyaṇo 'ṅgaṁ nara-bhū-jalāyanāt
tac cāpi satyaṁ na tavaiva māyā

O Lord, of whom Mahāviṣṇu is your expansion! Nārāyaṇa, Mahāviṣṇu, the source of the other puruṣas, is not you. Nor is the third puruṣa, dwelling within all beings, nor is the second puruṣa, the witness of all planets. Mahāviṣṇu, called Nārāyaṇa because he is the shelter of the Kāraṇa Ocean,

which gives rise to the material creation, is simply your expansion. That expansion of yours is real, not illusory. SB 10.14.14

Thus Yudhiṣṭhira was fully dedicated to Kṛṣṇa (nārāyaṇa-paraḥ) in order to please him.

Text 75.24

sarve janāḥ sura-ruco maṇi-kuṇḍala-srag-
uṣṇīṣa-kañcuka-dukūla-mahārghya-hārāḥ
nāryaś ca kuṇḍala-yugālaka-vṛnda-juṣṭa-
vaktra-śriyaḥ kanaka-mekhalayā virejuḥ

All the men there shone like devatās. They were adorned with jeweled earrings, flower garlands, turbans, waistcoats, silk dhotīs and valuable pearl necklaces. The lovely faces of the women were beautified by their earrings and locks of hair, and they all wore golden belts.

COMMENTARY: Janāḥ refers to men.

Text 75.25–26

athartvijo mahā-śīlāḥ sadasyā brahma-vādinaḥ
brahma-kṣatriya-viṭ-śudrā-rājāno ye samāgatāḥ
devarṣi-pitṛ-bhūtāni loka-pālāḥ sahānugāḥ
pūjitās tam anujñāpya sva-dhāmāni yayur nṛpa

Then the highly cultured priests, the great Vedic authorities who had served as sacrificial witnesses, the specially invited kings, the brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras, devatās, sages, Pitṛs and other living beings, and the chief planetary rulers and their followers—all of them, having been worshiped by King Yudhiṣṭhira, took his permission and departed, O King, each for his own abode.

COMMENTARY: After the bath and worship they went home. Mahāśīlāḥ means most worthy of worship. Loka-pālāḥ refers to the chief of the devatās such as Brahmā. In order, starting from the priests, he gave them permission to leave.

Text 75.27

hari-dāsasya rājarṣe rājasūya-mahodayam
naivātṛpyan praśaṁsantaḥ piban martyo ’mṛtaṁ yathā

As they all glorified the wonderful rājasūya-yajña performed by that great saintly king and servant of the Lord, they were not satiated, just as an ordinary man is never satiated when drinking nectar.

COMMENTARY: Hari means Kṛṣṇa who removes all faults, and who is attractive with his qualities and form. Yudhiṣṭhira was a servant of Kṛṣṇa, a king and a sage having all knowledge. The rājasūya was endowed with all qualities completely (mahodayam). Everyone praised it but could not be fully satisfied. This means they continually praised it. A human who is subject to death and who continually suffers may get a chance to drink nectar, which gives supreme bliss and takes away all suffering including death. He cannot be fully satisfied. Everyone there was in a similar state.

Text 75.28

tato yudhiṣṭhiro rājā suhṛt-sambandhi-bāndhavān
premṇā nivārayām āsa kṛṣṇaṁ ca tyāga-kātaraḥ

At that time Yudhiṣṭhira stopped a number of his friends, immediate family members and other relatives from departing, among them Kṛṣṇa. Out of love Yudhiṣṭhira could not let them go, for he felt the pain of imminent separation.

COMMENTARY: It was already said briefly that Kṛṣṇa along with his wives left, though Yudhiṣṭhira did not want this to happen. This happened later. After sending off persons related to the sacrifice, he made some who wanted to return home stay, out of great affection for them. After the sacrifice (tataḥ) after sending the priests to their abodes, he prevented close friends like Bhīṣma, relatives like Drupada, other well-wishers and Kṛṣṇa, Svayam Bhagavān from leaving. The reason was previously stated. Now the effects of that impeding separation are described: he was overcome with suffering from separation.

Text 75.29

bhagavān api tatrāṅga nyāvātsīt tat-priyaṁ-karaḥ
prasthāpya yadu-vīrāṁś ca sāmbādīṁś ca kuśasthalīm

My dear Parīkṣit, the Supreme Lord remained there for some time to please the king, after first sending Sāmba and the other Yadu heroes back to Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY: One should not think that Kṛṣṇa who is independent did not want to stay. Rather, because having affection for his devotee, his affection manifested in staying. Though he was supremely independent (bhagavān api) he stayed in Indraprastha along with his queens constantly (ni-avātsīt) in order to please his devotee Yudhiṣṭhira (tat-priyaṁ-karaḥ). "But he should also please the people of Dvārkā who were suffering from his long absence." He sent the Yadu heroes back in order to pacify them. "How could they be pacified by his sending them?" They were his expansions. He sent back Sāmba and others back, since Pradyumna had stayed in Dvārakā. He sent Sāmba and others sons back with their mothers.

Text 75.30

itthaṁ rājā dharma-suto manoratha-mahārṇavam
su-dustaraṁ samuttīrya kṛṣṇenāsīd gata-jvaraḥ

Thus King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, was at last relieved of his burning ambition, having by the grace of Kṛṣṇa successfully crossed the vast and formidable ocean of his desires.

COMMENTARY: Previously Yudhiṣṭhira said that he wanted to worship Kṛṣṇa's expansions by performing the sacrifice (SB 10.72.3-5). Now he had crossed the ocean of that desire, with complete happiness (sam-uttīrya) because of Kṛṣṇa's assistance.

Text 75.31

ekadāntaḥ-pure tasya vīkṣya duryodhanaḥ śriyam
atapyad rājasūyasya mahitvaṁ cācyutātmanaḥ

One day Duryodhana, while observing the riches of King Yudhiṣṭhira's palace, felt greatly disturbed by the magnificence of both the rājasūya sacrifice and its performer, the king, whose life and soul was Acyuta.

COMMENTARY: Having mentioned that Yudhiṣṭhira's sacrifice was a cause of Duryodhana's sorrow, Śukadeva now describes the reason until verse 39. Out of great pride Duryodhana usually stayed in his own camp. But one

time, burning with envy on constantly hearing about it, he went to the palace and saw the wealth of the kingdom and the sacrifice's influence and prominence (mahitvam). Previously he did not pay much attention because of the crowds at the time of the sacrifice and occupation with his duties. Now however, with the absence of these distractions he saw everything in detail (vi-īkṣya). He showed great pain. But Yudhiṣṭhira's wealth and the sacrifice's greatness was proper, without the fault of pride, since his heart was focused on Kṛṣṇa, who was full of all powers and sweetness (acyutātmanaḥ).

Text 75.32

yasmiṁs narendra-ditijendra-surendra-lakṣmīr
nānā vibhānti kila viśva-sṛjopakḷptāḥ
tābhiḥ patīn drupada-rāja-sutopatasthe
yasyāṁ viṣakta-hṛdayaḥ kuru-rāḍ atapyat

In that palace all the collected wealth of the kings of men, demons and gods were brilliantly manifest, having been brought there by the cosmic inventor, Maya Dānava. With those riches Draupadī served her husbands, and Duryodhana, the prince of the Kurus, lamented because he was attracted to that wealth.

COMMENTARY: The grandeur of the sacrifice has been described. Now the wealth of the palace is briefly described, as the cause of Duryodhana's grief. In the palace (yasmin), various types of wealth from kings and devatās shone brilliantly. Sma indicates certainty. This was because the palace was made by Viśvakarmā or because the assembly hall was made by Maya (viśvasṛjā). By the construction of the city, Draupadī served her husband Yudhiṣṭhira. Citsukha's version has patīn (husbands). She was the daughter of King Drupada. This suggests her extraordinary beauty and qualities, through her remarkable birth. His heart became filled with envy of that wealth (yasyām). Out of envy he thought of himself as the king of the Kurus (kuru-rāṭ).

Text 75.33

yasmin tadā madhu-pater mahiṣī-sahasraṁ
śroṇī-bhareṇa śanakaiḥ kvaṇad-aṅghri-śobham

madhye su-cāru kuca-kuṅkuma-śoṇa-hāraṁ
śrīman-mukhaṁ pracala-kuṇḍala-kuntalāḍhyam

Kṛṣṇa's thousands of queens were also staying in the palace. Their feet moved slowly, weighed down by their hips, and the bells on their feet tinkled charmingly. Their waists were very slender, the kuṅkuma from their breasts reddened their pearl necklaces, and their swaying earrings and flowing locks of hair enhanced the exquisite beauty of their faces.

COMMENTARY: It is said reme ramābhir nija-kāma-samplutaḥ: although fully satisfied within himself, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with his pleasing wives. (SB 10.59.43) As Kṛṣṇa's Lakṣmīs, they played in that palace, after the rājasūya sacrifice (tadā). They were the wives of Kṛṣṇa, Svayam Bhagavān (madhupateḥ). They were beautiful because of their jingling feet, which moved slowly because of the weight of their hips. Their faces were beautiful because of their moving earrings. One should understand that this description only indicates a portion of their beauty.

Text 75.34–35

sabhāyāṁ maya-kḷptāyāṁ kvāpi dharma-suto 'dhirāṭ
vṛto 'nugair bandhubhiś ca kṛṣṇenāpi sva-cakṣuṣā
āsīnaḥ kāñcane sākṣād āsane maghavān iva
pārameṣṭhya-śrīyā juṣṭaḥ stūyamānaś ca vandibhiḥ

It so happened that Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, was sitting just like Indra on a golden throne in the assembly hall built by Maya Dānava. Present with him were his attendants and family members, and also Kṛṣṇa, his special eye. Displaying the wealth of Brahmā himself, King Yudhiṣṭhira was being praised by the court poets.

COMMENTARY: Six verses (34-39) describe what happened at that time. Yudhiṣṭhira was sitting in that hall made by Maya. This suggests its wondrous nature. This is described in Mahābhārata, Sabhā-parva.

sabhā tu sā mahārāja śātakumbha-maya-drumā
daśa kiṣkusahasrāṇi samantād āyatābhavat
yathā vahner yathārkasya somasya ca yathaiva sā
bhrājamānā tathā divyā babhāra paramaṁ vapuḥ

tāṁ sma tatra mayenoktā rakṣanti ca vahanti ca
sabhām aṣṭau sahasrāṇi kiṅkarā nāma rākṣasāḥ

That hall had pillars of gold, ten thousand hands wide. Its exalted, divine form shone like fire, like the sun and like the moon. Eight thousand Rākṣasas guardsṅ, directed by Maya, protected and maintained the hall.

Though Yudhiṣṭhira was the emperor (adhirāṭ), he was not proud of his position because he was dedicated to dharma (dharma-sutaḥ). Kṛṣṇa was like his eye, advising what was beneficial or harmful (sva-cakṣuṣā). Or Kṛṣṇa was the object of Yudhiṣṭhira's eyes. Or, just as one cannot enjoy such wealth without eyes, Yudhiṣṭhira could not enjoy his wealth without Kṛṣṇa. What more can be said? He was like Indra, and served by wealth equal to Brahmā's.

Text 75.36

tatra duryodhano mānī parīto bhrātṛbhir nṛpa
kirīṭa-mālī nyaviśad asi-hastaḥ kṣipan ruṣā

Proud Duryodhana, holding a sword in his hand and wearing a crown and necklace, went into the palace in the company of his brothers. O King, in anger he then made insulting remarks.

COMMENTARY: In that hall, thinking he would be praised for wearing his crown and necklace so he could display his own wealth, out of pride (mānī), thinking they were very valuable, he entered the hall. To show his valor he held a sword in his hand. To show his support, he came surrounded by his brothers. Proud and angry, shouting abusive words, he entered without any respect (ni-āviśat). O King! This indicates "Kings will become proud like this." Giving up going on the regular path because of fear of the guards, but not knowing the presence of water, because of his deep envy, he began wandering here and there to see the splendor of the hall as described in Mahābhārata. Not understanding the hall's nature, he lifted his cloth to avoid the water. He then fell into the water, and his crown fell off. By falling into the water, he became ashamed.

Text 75.37

sthale ’bhyagṛhṇād vastrāntaṁ
jalaṁ matvā sthale ’patat
jale ca sthala-vad bhrāntyā
maya-māyā-vimohitaḥ

Bewildered by the illusions created through Maya Dānava’s magic, Duryodhana mistook the solid floor for water and lifted his lower garment. And elsewhere he fell into the water, mistaking it for the solid floor.

COMMENTARY: He lifted his lower garment (vasrāntam). He mistook water for solid ground and then fell in the water because he was confused. This was arranged especially to destroy his pride (vi-mohitaḥ) by the expert craft of Maya who made things appear opposite to their true nature (māyā). What to speak of the illusions created by devatās, and even more the illusions created by the Lord. This was arranged to mock Duryodhana’s pride. Mahābhaṛata describes this.

sphāṭika-sthalam āsādya jalam ity abhiśaṅkayā
sva-vastrotkarṣaṇaṁ rājā kṛtavān buddhi-mohitaḥ
tataḥ sphāṭika-toyāṁ vai sphāṭikāmbuja-śobhitām
vāpīṁ matvā sthalam iti savāsāḥ prāpataj jale

Coming to a crystal floor, he thought it was water and in illusion lifted his cloth. Thinking water to be crystal, decorated with crystal lotuses, he fell into the water with his clothing on.

jale nipatitaṁ dṛṣṭvā kiṁkarā jahasur bhṛśam
vāsāṁsi ca śubhāny asmai pradadū rājaśāsanāt
tathāgataṁ tu taṁ dṛṣṭvā bhīmaseno mahābalaḥ
arjunaś ca yamau cobhau sarve te prāhasaṁs tadā
nāmarṣayat tatas teṣām avahāsam amarṣaṇaḥ
ākāraṁ rakṣamāṇas tu na sa tān samudaikṣata
punar vasanam utkṣipya pratariṣyann iva sthalam
āruroha tataḥ sarve jahasus te punar janāḥ
dvāraṁ ca vivṛtākāraṁ lalāṭena samāhanat
saṁvṛtaṁ ceti manvāno dvāra-deśād upāramat

The guards laughed loudly on seeing him fall in the water. They gave him fresh cloth on the order of the king. Seeing him, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and

Sahadeva all laughed. Being unused to putting up with insults, Duryodhana could not bear that laugh of theirs. Concealing his emotions, he did not even cast his glance on them. And beholding him once more draw up his clothes to cross a piece of dry land which he had mistaken for water, they all laughed again. Thinking a door was open, he hit his forehead. Coming upon another door that was really open, the king thinking it as closed, went away from it.

Text 75.38

jahāsa bhīmas taṁ dṛṣṭvā striyo nṛpatayo pare
nivāryamāṇā apy aṅga rājñā kṛṣṇānumoditāḥ

My dear Parīkṣit, Bhīma laughed to see this, and so did the women, kings and others. King Yudhiṣṭhira tried to stop them, but Kṛṣṇa showed his approval.

COMMENTARY: Seeing Duryodhana and his brothers in this condition, Bhīma laughed, since it happened in front of him. The other kings related to the Pāṇḍavas also laughed. Or kings and others, the guards ṅ laughed. Of all of them, Bhīma was of the highest position. Others are mentioned in order of their position. The laugher was permitted by Kṛṣṇa who attracts all hearts, by his smile and glances. Śukadeva addresses Parīkṣit with a laugh, on remembering the deep laughter which even the king could not stop, since it was permitted by the Lord.

Text 75.38

sa vrīḍito ’vag-vadano ruṣā jvalan
niṣkramya tūṣṇīṁ prayayau gajāhvayam
hā-heti śabdaḥ su-mahān abhūt satām
ajāta-śatrur vimanā ivābhavat
babhūva tūṣṇīṁ bhagavān bhuvo bharaṁ
samujjihīrṣur bhramati sma yad-dṛśā

Humiliated and burning with anger, Duryodhana turned his face down, left without uttering a word and went back to Hastināpura. The saintly persons present loudly cried out, “Alas, alas!” and King Yudhiṣṭhira was somewhat saddened. But the Supreme Lord, whose mere glance had

bewildered Duryodhana, remained silent, for his intention was to remove the burden of the earth.

COMMENTARY: With downcast head (avag-vadanaḥ) Duryodhana left. People cried out because they worried about some mischief, since Duryodhana was most evil. Yudhiṣṭhira, being without an enemy, was somewhat (iva) saddened because of his natural compassion. The Lord was silent because his desire was fulfilled. That desire is mentioned: he wanted to remove the burden of the earth. Instead of samujjihīrṣḥr sometimes jihīrṣur ucchaiḥ is seen. But this is not accepted by Śrīdhara Svāmī.

Text 75.40

etat te 'bhihitaṁ rājan yat pṛṣṭo 'ham iha tvayā
suyodhanasya daurātmyaṁ rājasūye mahā-kratau

I have now replied to your question, O King, concerning why Duryodhana was dissatisfied on the occasion of the great rajasūya asacrifice.

COMMENTARY: Duryodhana was dissatisfied after the rājasūya sacrifice.

Chapter Seventy-six
The Battle Between Śālva and the Vṛṣṇis

Text 76.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
athānyad api kṛṣṇasya śṛṇu karmādbhutaṁ nṛpa
krīḍā-nara-śarīrasya yathā saubha-patir hataḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Now please hear, O King, another wondrous deed performed by Kṛṣṇa, who appeared in his humanlike body to enjoy pastimes. Hear how he killed the master of Saubha.

COMMENTARY: After this (atha), when Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvārakā, he killed Śālva. That is explained later. This act was astonishing because Kṛṣṇa had a human-like body for pastimes. He distributed various sweet pastimes in this form. "What was the action?" His manner of killing Śālva was amazing.

Text 76.2

śiśupāla-sakhaḥ śālvo rukmiṇy-udvāha āgataḥ
yadubhir nirjitaḥ saṅkhye jarāsandhādayas tathā

Śālva was a friend of Śiśupāla's. When he attended the wedding of Rukmiṇī, the Yadu warriors defeated him in battle, along with Jarāsandha and the other kings.

COMMENTARY: Śālva was defeated, and even Jarāsandha was defeated.

Text 76.3

śālvaḥ pratijñām akaroc chṛṇvatāṁ sarva-bhūbhujām
ayādavāṁ kṣmāṁ karişye pauruṣaṁ mama paśyata

Śālva swore in the presence of all the kings: "I will rid the earth of Yādavas. Just see my prowess!"

COMMENTARY: He made a promise to kill all the Yādavas while the kings listened. The possessive case is used to suggest that they listened, but did not respect his oath, since it was impossible to fulfill. Or the possessive

case can stand for the locative. Then the meaning is that they supported his promise.

Text 76.4

iti mūḍhaḥ pratijñāya devaṁ paśu-patiṁ prabhum
ārādhayām āsa nṛpaḥ pāṁśu-muṣṭiṁ sakṛd grasan

Having thus made his vow, the foolish king proceeded to worship Śiva as his deity by eating a handful of dust each day and nothing more.

COMMENTARY: He made this promise because he was foolish, with no intelligence, since it was impossible to kill them. He then worshipped Śiva because he was his family deity (devam), the master of people who were like animals (such as Śālva), and who could fulfill his desires (prabhum). He could enjoy happiness (nṛpaḥ). His vow was quite suitable: eating dust. It was ridiculous.

Text 76.5

saṁvatsarānte bhagavān āśu-toṣa umā-patiḥ
vareṇa cchandayām āsa śālvaṁ śaraṇam āgatam

The great Lord Umāpati is known as "he who is quickly pleased," yet only at the end of a year did he gratify Śālva, who had approached him for shelter, by offering him a choice of benedictions.

COMMENTARY: Śiva (bhagavān) appeared because he knew Śāthe benediction given to Śālva would fail. He was the master of Umā, whose portion was māyā. Someone may say, "It would be better if Śiva did not come." Śālva was surrendered. If Śiva did not respond, people of this world would think that Śiva ignored those who surrendered. Generally, as the lord of the animals he hides himself by living in places for burning bodies and associating with its residents or appearing as Durvasā along with Dattatreya. It is not proper that Śiva encourage persons opposed to the Lord and increase their powers. He actually gave the benediction because the Lord had a great desire to fight.

Text 76.6

devāsura-manuṣyāṇāṁ gandharvoraga-rakṣasām
abhedyaṁ kāma-gaṁ vavre sa yānaṁ vṛṣṇi-bhīṣaṇam

Śālva chose a vehicle that could be destroyed by neither devatās, demons, humans, Gandharvas, Uragas nor Rākṣasas, that could travel anywhere he wished to go, and that would terrify the Vṛṣṇis.

COMMENTARY: He chose a vehicle that would frighten the Vṛṣṇis. However, it would not kill them. This last part of the benediction was inspired by Śiva.

Text 76.7

tatheti giriśādiṣṭo mayaḥ para-puraṁ-jayaḥ
puraṁ nirmāya śālvāya prādāt saubham ayas-mayam

Śiva said, "So be it." On his order, Maya Dānava, who conquers his enemies' cities, constructed a flying iron city named Saubha and presented it to Śālva.

COMMENTARY: The vehicle or huge chariot had a form similar to the city called Saubha. Maya gave the vehicle to him with glee (pra-adāt), since he was also a demon.

Text 76.8

sa labdhvā kāma-gaṁ yānaṁ tamo-dhāma durāsadam
yayas dvāravatīṁ śālvo vairaṁ vṛṣṇi-kṛtaṁ smaran

This unassailable vehicle was filled with darkness and could go anywhere. Upon obtaining it, Śālva went to Dvārakā, remembering the Vṛṣṇis' enmity toward him.

COMMENTARY: Because it was filled with darkness it was invincible. It could not be seen by the eye. Instead of vṛṣṇi-kṛtam sometimes kṛṣṇa-kṛtam is seen.

Text 76.9–11

nirudhya senayā śālvo mahatyā bharatarṣabha
purīṁ babhañjopavanān udyānāni ca sarvaśaḥ
sa-gopurāṇi dvārāṇi prāsādāṭṭāla-tolikāḥ

vihārān sa vimānāgryān nipetuḥ śastra-vṛṣṭayaḥ
śilā-drumāś cāśanayaḥ sarpā āsāra-śarkarāḥ
pracaṇḍaś cakravāto 'bhūd rajasācchāditā diśaḥ

Śālva besieged the city with a large army, O best of the Bharatas, decimating the outlying parks and gardens, the mansions along with their observatories, towering gateways and surrounding walls, and also the public recreational areas. From his excellent airship he threw down a torrent of weapons, including stones, tree trunks, thunderbolts, snakes and hailstones. A fierce whirlwind arose and blanketed all directions with dust.

COMMENTARY: Three verses describe his attack. He covered the city completely with troops. Śukadeva calls out to Parīkṣit in amazement. O best of the Bharatas! Or he comforts him as he worries about those dear to him. "As the best of your dynasty, you know the power of the Lord. You should not worry at all." Śālva was intent on destroying the city (babhañja). The word is used to indicate destruction that was supposed to happen in the near future. (However, he could not destroy the city.) In order to destroy the outer gates and other gates he constantly showered (ni-petuḥ) weapons. Fierce whirlwinds blew in front of the vehicle. Dust arose because of the whirlwind's strong, quick revolutions.

Text 76.12

ity ardyamānā saubhena kṛṣṇasya nagarī bhṛśam
nābhyapadyata śaṁ rājaṁs tri-pureṇa yathā mahī

Thus terribly tormented by the airship Saubha, Kṛṣṇa's city had no peace, O King, just like the earth when it was attacked by the three aerial cities of the demons.

COMMENTARY: The city of Kṛṣṇa was fiercely attacked. Śukadeva calls out to Parīkṣit in astonishment and grief. This pastime, difficult to understand, was the will of the Lord.

Text 76.13

pradyumno bhagavān vīkṣya bādhyamānā nijāḥ prajāḥ
ma bhaiṣṭety abhyadhād vīro rathārūḍho mahā-yaśāḥ

Seeing his subjects so harassed, the glorious and heroic Pradyumna told them, "Do not fear," and mounted his chariot.

COMMENTARY: Beginning to realize that his citizens were afflicted, Pradyumna said, "Do not fear" since he was the third expansion in the catur-vyūha (bhagavān). In the pastimes in this world he was a warrior, and the best warrior (mahā-rathaḥ). This was most astonishing. He would have an amusing pastime with insignificant demons.

Text 76.14–15

sātyakiś cārudeṣṇaś ca sāmbo 'krūraḥ sahānujaḥ
hārdikyo bhānuvindaś ca gadaś ca śuka-sāraṇau
apare ca maheṣv-āsā ratha-yūthapa-yūthapāḥ
niryayur daṁśitā guptā rathebhāśva-padātibhiḥ

The chief commanders of the chariot warriors—Sātyaki, Cārudeṣṇa, Sāmba, Akrūra and his younger brothers, along with Hārdikya, Bhānuvinda, Gada, Śuka and Sāraṇa—went out of the city with many other eminent bowmen, all girded in armor and protected by contingents of soldiers riding on chariots, elephants and horses, and also by companies of infantry.

COMMENTARY: Cārudeṣṇa was the younger brother of Pradyumna. The fourteen younger brothers of Akrūra were Āsaṅga, Sārameya and others. Bhānuvinda or Bhānu was the eldest of Satyabhāmā's sons. Śuka was a Yadu warrior. Śāraṇa was the son of Rohiṇī. The word ca indicates that these were the chief among all the warriors who left the city. Balarāma, Vasudeva, Ugrasena and others stayed inside to protect the city. The list of chariots, elephants, horses and foot soldiers is in order of most important to less important.

Text 76.16

tataḥ pravavṛte yuddhaṁ śālvānāṁ yadubhiḥ saha
yathāsurāṇāṁ vibudhais tumulaṁ loma-harṣaṇam

A tumultuous, hair-raising battle then commenced between Śālva's forces and the Yadus. It equaled the great battles between the demons and devatās.

COMMENTARY: Śālvānām refers to persons coming from Śālva's province or his followers.

Text 76.17

tāś ca saubha-pater māyā divyāstrai rukmiṇī-sutaḥ
kṣaṇena nāśayām āsa naiśaṁ tama ivoṣṇa-guḥ

With his divine weapons Pradyumna instantly destroyed all of Śālva's magic illusions, in the same way that the warm rays of the sun dissipate the darkness of night.

COMMENTARY: Pradyumna was the eldest son of the best queen Rukmiṇī and thus possessed greatness.

Text 76.18–19

vivyādha pañca-viṁśatyā svarṇa-puṅkhair ayo-mukhaiḥ
śālvasya dhvajinī-pālaṁ śaraiḥ sannata-parvabhiḥ
śatenātāḍayac chālvam ekaikenāsya sainikān
daśabhir daśabhir netṝn vāhanāni tribhis tribhiḥ

Pradyumna's arrows all had gold shafts, iron heads and perfectly smooth joints. With twenty-five of them he struck down Śālva's commander-in-chief [Dyumān], and with one hundred he struck Śālva himself. Then he pierced Śālva's officers with one arrow each, his chariot drivers with ten arrows each, and his horses and other carriers with three arrows each.

COMMENTARY: With his arrows having iron heads and gold shafts he was able to deeply pierce the enemies' bodies. He pierced each of the officers with one arrow each, each driver with ten arrows each and each carrier with three arrows each.

Text 76.20

tad adbhutaṁ mahat karma pradyumnasya mahātmanaḥ
dṛṣṭvā taṁ pūjayām āsuḥ sarve sva-para-sainikāḥ

When they saw the glorious Pradyumna perform that amazing and mighty feat, all the soldiers on both sides praised him.

COMMENTARY: Seeing his extraordinary, most excellent (mahat) feat, they all praised him. However, it was not amazing for him since he had

unlimited śakti (mahātmanaḥ).

Text 76.21

bahu-rūpaika-rūpaṁ tad dṛśyate na ca dṛśyate
māyā-mayaṁ maya-kṛtaṁ durvibhāvyaṁ parair abhūt

At one moment the magic airship built by Maya Dānava appeared in many identical forms, and the next moment it was again only one. Sometimes it was visible, and sometimes not. Thus Śālva's opponents could never be sure where it was.

COMMENTARY: Out of fear of Pradyumna, the vehicle became invisible and unsteady in form. This is described in two verses (21-22).

Text 76.22

kvacid bhūmau kvacid vyomni giri-mūrdhni jale kvacit
alāta-cakra-vad bhrāmyat saubhaṁ tad duravasthitam

From one moment to the next, the Saubha airship appeared on the earth, in the sky, on a mountain peak or in the water. Like a whirling, flaming baton, it never remained in any one place.

COMMENTARY: Sometimes it appeared on top of Raivataka Mountain.

Text 76.23

yatra yatropalakṣyeta sa-saubhaḥ saha-sainikaḥ
śālvas tatas tato 'muñcañ charān sātvata-yūthapāḥ

Wherever Śālva would appear with his Saubha ship and his army, there the Yadu commanders would shoot their arrows.

COMMENTARY: Wherever they slightly saw (upa-lakṣyeta) the vehicle, they would shoot.

Text 76.24

śarair agny-arka-saṁsparśair āśī-viṣa-durāsadaiḥ
pīḍyamāna-purānīkaḥ śālvo 'muhyat pareritaiḥ

Śālva became bewildered upon seeing his army and aerial city harassed by his enemy's arrows, which struck like fire and the sun and were as

intolerable as snake venom.

COMMENTARY: The arrows were like fire because they burned like fire. They were like the sun because they heated everywhere like the sun's rays.

Text 76.25

śālvānīkapa-śastraughair vṛṣṇi-vīrā bhṛśārditāḥ
na tatyajū raṇaṁ svaṁ svaṁ loka-dvaya-jigīṣavaḥ

Because the heroes of the Vṛṣṇi clan were eager for victory in this world and the next, they did not abandon their assigned posts on the battlefield, even though the downpour of weapons hurled by Śālva's commanders tormented them.

COMMENTARY: The Yadus wanted victory in this life and the next. They acted according to kṣatriya codes with desire for fame, in order to instruct kṣatriya dharma and the dharma of fame. Or they desired to control the upper and lower worlds by spreading their fame in order to benefit the universe.

Text 76.26

śālvāmātyo dyumān nāma pradyumnaṁ prak prapīḍitaḥ
āsādya gadayā maurvyā vyāhatya vyanadad balī

Śālva's minister Dyumān, previously wounded by Pradyumna, now approached him and, roaring loudly, struck him with his club of black steel.

COMMENTARY: Previously seriously afflicted by Pradyumna's weapons, Dyumān attacked with vehemence (vy-āhatya).

Text 76.27

pradyumnaṁ gadayā sīrṇa-vakṣaḥ-sthalam ariṁ-damam
apovāha raṇāt sūto dharma-vid dārukātmajaḥ

Pradyumna's driver, the son of Dāruka, thought that his valiant master's chest had been shattered by the club. Knowing well his dharma, he removed Pradyumna from the battlefield.

COMMENTARY: He removed him from the field though his chest was not shattered (asīrna-vakṣaḥ-sthalam), so that he could again defeat his enemy after resting a moment (arindamam). “But was removing him proper?” He knew the dharma of protecting the warrior on the chariot since he was the son of Dāruka.

Text 76.28

labdha-samjño muhūrtena kārṣṇiḥ sārathim abravīt
aho asādhv idaṁ sūta yad raṇān me ’pasarpaṇam

Quickly regaining consciousness, Kṛṣṇa’s son Pradyumna said to his charioteer, “O driver, this is abominable—for me to have been removed from the battlefield!

COMMENTARY: As Kṛṣṇa’s son, Pradyumna was attracted to Kṛṣṇa’s variegated pastimes (kāṛṣṇaḥ). Therefore, his fainting must have been only imitation. Aho indicates grief. This is most improper for me, the son of the king of the Yadus.

Text 76.29

na yadūnāṁ kule jātaḥ śrūyate raṇa-vicyutaḥ
vinā mat klība-cittena sūtena prāpta-kilbiṣāt

“Except for me, no one born in the Yadu dynasty has ever been known to abandon the battlefield since I have attained sin because of a driver with a coward’s heart.

COMMENTARY: I have attained sin by a driver whose heart is without valor (klība-cittena).

Text 76.30

kiṁ nu vakṣye ’bhisaṅgamya pitarau rāma-keśavau
yuddhāt samyag apakrāntaḥ pṛṣṭas tatrātmanaḥ kṣamam

“What will I say to my fathers, Balarāma and Keśava, when I return to them after having simply fled the battle? What can I tell them that will befit my honor?

COMMENTARY: Rāma means “he who gives joy to his relatives by killing the enemy.” Keśava means “he who killed Keśī as play.” Thus rāma-keśavau

indicates their great prowess. How will I speak about one's proper action (kṣamam)—what must be done according to dharma—when asked?

Text 76.31

vyaktaṁ me kathayiṣyanti hasantyo bhrātṛ-jāmayaḥ
klaibyaṁ kathaṁ kathaṁ vīra tavānyaiḥ kathyatāṁ mṛdhe

"Certainly, my sisters-in-law will laugh at me and say, 'O hero, tell us how in the world your enemies turned you into such a coward in battle.'"

COMMENTARY: Having fallen from my great dharma, I will be mocked. The wives of my elder cousins will speak. "Tell us how you became impotent because of the enemies (anyaiḥ). O hero!" They will joke in saying this. Or, will this weakness be described by others? It will not be spoken by anyone. The meaning they will convey is, "You should not be embarrassed." He says this to scold his charioteer. Such wounding words would not actually be said by his relatives.

Text 76.32

sārathir uvāca
dharmaṁ vijānatāyuṣman kṛtam etan mayā vibho
sūtaḥ kṛcchra-gataṁ rakṣed rathinaṁ sārathiṁ rathī

The driver replied: O long-lived one, I have done this knowing full well my dharma. O my Lord, the chariot driver must protect the master of the chariot when he is in danger, and the master must also protect his driver.

COMMENTARY: The affix mat is used to indicate an eternal condition. O person spread over all time (ayuṣman)! O person spread over all places (vibho)! Why do you worry about your position? Do not do so. I have done this, knowing in detail (vi-janatā) about dharma. The charioteer will protect the fighter in danger and the fighter will protect the charioteer.

Text 76.33

etad viditvā tu bhavān mayāpovāhito raṇāt
upasṛṣṭaḥ pareṇeti mūrcchito gadayā hataḥ

With this rule in mind, I removed you from the battlefield, since you had been struck by your enemy's club, were injured and became unconscious.

COMMENTARY: I knew that you were afflicted by the enemy, injured by the club and had fainted. Apovāhitaḥ instead of apavāhitaḥ is poetic license.

Chapter Seventy-seven
Lord Kṛṣṇa Slays the Demon Śālva

Text 77.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
sa upaspṛśya salilaṁ daṁśito dhṛta-kārmukaḥ
naya māṁ dyumataḥ pārśvaṁ vīrasyety āha sārathim

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After refreshing himself with water, putting on his armor and picking up his bow, Pradyumna told his driver, "Take me back to where the hero Dyumān is standing."

COMMENTARY: One version has tu upaspṛśya. The word tu indicates a change of topic. The charioteer had taken off Pradyumna's armor in order to revive him. Now he put on his armor (daṁśitaḥ) and took up his bow. This shows his great enthusiasm to fight. The reason for going back was that there was a hero there (vīrasya) waiting to fight.

Text 77.2

vidhamantaṁ sva-sainyāni dyumantaṁ rukmiṇī-sutaḥ
pratihatya pratyavidhyān nārācair aṣṭabhiḥ smayan

In Pradyumna's absence, Dyumān had been devastating his army, but now Pradyumna counterattacked Dyumān and, smiling, pierced him with eight nārāca arrows.

COMMENTARY: He attacked Dyumān who had penetrated his army and pierced him in response to his attacks, with special arrows. He smiled as a sign of his perseverance as a warrior. He was not angry. Thus his smiling is praised.

Text 77.3

caturbhiś caturo vāhān sūtam ekena cāhanat
dvābhyaṁ dhanuś ca ketuṁ ca śareṇānyena vai śiraḥ

With four of these arrows he struck Dyumān's four horses, with one arrow, his driver, with two more arrows, his bow and chariot flag, and

with the last arrow, Dyumān's head.

COMMENTARY: The word vai indicates everything including his head.

Text 77.4

gada-sātyaki-sāmbādyā jaghnuḥ saubha-pater balam
petuḥ samudre saubheyāḥ sarve sañchinna-kandharāḥ

Gada, Sātyaki, Sāmba and others began killing Śālva's army, and thus all the soldiers inside the airship began falling into the ocean, their necks severed.

COMMENTARY: Not only did he show prowess. Inspired by him, the Yadu warriors, began decimating Śālva's army. Almost all had their heads severed.

Text 77.5

evaṁ yadūnāṁ śālvānāṁ nighnatām itaretaram
yuddhaṁ tri-nava-rātraṁ tad abhūt tumulam ulbaṇam

As the Yadus and Śālva's followers thus went on attacking one another, the tumultuous, fearsome battle continued for twenty-seven days and nights.

COMMENTARY: The fight lasted twenty-seven days.

Text 77.6–7

indraprasthaṁ gataḥ kṛṣṇa āhūto dharma-sūnunā
rājasūye 'tha nivṛtte śiśupāle ca saṁsthite
kuru-vṛddhān anujñāpya munīṁś ca sa-sutāṁ pṛthām
nimittāny ati-ghorāṇi paśyan dvāravatīṁ yayau

Invited by Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, Kṛṣṇa had gone to Indraprastha. Now that the rājasūya sacrifice had been completed and Śiśupāla killed, he took leave of the Kuru elders and the great sages, and also of Pṛthā and her sons. He returned to Dvārakā, while seeing inauspicious omens on the way.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa actually went because Nārada had given information. He had gone to Indraprastha for the rājasūya sacrifice. That was now

completed. Instead of atha sometimes ca is seen. On the way back he saw omens.

Text 77.8

āha cāham ihāyāta ārya-miśrābhisaṅgataḥ
rājanyāś caidya-pakṣīyā nūnaṁ hanyuḥ purīṁ mama

The Lord said to himself: Because I have come here with my respected elder brother, kings partial to Śiśupāla may be attacking my capital city.

COMMENTARY: I have come here with my honorable (miśra) elder (ārya) Balarāma. Or I have come with (miśra) elders.

Text 77.9

vīkṣya tat kadanaṁ svānāṁ nirūpya pura-rakṣaṇam
saubhaṁ ca śālva-rājaṁ ca dārukaṁ prāha keśavaḥ

Seeing the omen he arrived at Dvārakā and saw his people defending the city and also saw Śālva and his Saubha airship. Keśava then addressed Dāruka as follows.

COMMENTARY: Seeing the bad omens (kadaman) he returned.

Text 77.10

rathaṁ prāpaya me sūta śālvasyāntikam āśu vai
sambhramas te na kartavyo māyāvī saubha-rāḍ ayam

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] O driver, quickly take my chariot near Śālva. This lord of Saubha is a powerful magician; don't let him bewilder you.

COMMENTARY: Vai means certainly (eva). Do not be alarmed or confused (sambhramaḥ) since Śālva uses illusion. He is not a warrior by nature. He was called a controller (raṭ) because of the Saubha vehicle made of māyā.

Text 77.11

ity uktaś codayām āsa ratham āsthāya dārukaḥ
viśantaṁ dadṛśuḥ sarve sve pare cāruṇānujam

Thus ordered, Dāruka took command of the Lord's chariot and drove forth. As the chariot entered the battlefield, everyone there, both friend

and foe, caught sight of the emblem of Garuḍa.

COMMENTARY: Everyone saw the chariot with the Garuḍa emblem enter the battle.

Text 77.12

śālvaś ca kṛṣṇam ālokya hata-prāya-baleśvaraḥ
prāharat kṛṣṇa-sūtaya śaktiṁ bhīma-ravāṁ mṛdhe

When Śālva, the master of a decimated army, saw Kṛṣṇa approaching, he hurled his spear at the Lord's charioteer. The spear roared in a frightening way as it flew across the battlefield.

COMMENTARY: Though he was the lord of a decimated army, Śālva in the battlefield hurled a spear in order to strike Kṛṣṇa (pra-āharat).

Text 77.13

tām āpatantīṁ nabhasi maholkām iva raṁhasā
bhāsayantīṁ diśaḥ śauriḥ sāyakaiḥ śatadhācchinat

Śālva's hurtling spear lit up the whole sky like a mighty meteor, but Kṛṣṇa tore the approaching weapon into hundreds of pieces with his arrows.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa destroyed the spear while it was in the sky.

Text 77.14

taṁ ca ṣoḍaśabhir viddhvā bānaiḥ saubhaṁ ca khe bhramat
avidhyac chara-sandohaiḥ khaṁ sūrya iva raśmibhiḥ

Kṛṣṇa then pierced Śālva with sixteen arrows and struck the Saubha airship with a deluge of arrows as it darted about the sky. Firing his arrows, the Lord appeared like the sun flooding the heavens with its rays.

COMMENTARY: Though the vehicle moved in the sky, Kṛṣṇa struck it.

Text 77.15

śālvaḥ śaures tu doḥ savyaṁ sa-śārṅgaṁ śārṅga-dhanvanaḥ
bibheda nyapatad dhastāc chārṅgam āsīt tad adbhutam

Śālva then managed to strike Kṛṣṇa's left arm, which held his bow Śārṅga, and, amazingly, Śārṅga fell from his hand.

COMMENTARY: Doḥ (arm) is neuter. Śālva struck Kṛṣṇa's left arm. According to Raghu-kāvya he struck his bow.

Text 77.16

hāhā-kāro mahān āsīd bhūtānāṁ tatra paśyatām
ninadya saubha-rāḍ uccair idam āha janārdanam

Those who witnessed this all cried out in dismay. Then the master of Saubha roared loudly and addressed Janārdana, destroyer of the wicked.

COMMENTARY: The Lord was he who destroyed (ardanam) wicked people (jana) like Śālva. He acted in this way as a pastime only. Śālva spoke to him. This shows Śālva's arrogance and foolishness.

Text 77.17–18

yat tvayā mūḍha naḥ sakhyur bhrātur bhāryā hṛtekṣatām
pramattaḥ sa sabhā-madhye tvayā vyāpāditaḥ sakhā
taṁ tvādya niśitair bāṇair aparājita-māninam
nayāmy apunar-āvṛttiṁ yadi tiṣṭher mamāgrataḥ

[Śālva said:] You fool! Because in our presence you kidnapped the bride of our friend Śiśupāla, your own cousin, and because you later murdered him in the sacred assembly while he was inattentive, today with my sharp arrows I will send you to the land of no return! Though you think yourself invincible, I will kill you now if you dare stand before me.

COMMENTARY: Because you stole the bride of your brother (cousin) and our friend, and in the assembly, not the battlefield, you killed him while he was inattentive, I will kill you today. Tvayā is repeated to indicate Śālva's hatred of Kṛṣṇa. Since he is my friend (sakhā), I must take revenge. I will kill you if you stand before me. By this he indicates that Kṛṣṇa should flee in fear. Sarasvatī gives another meaning:

"O wise one (amūḍha)! Śiśupāla was our friend and brother. You took your own wife, since she is Lakṣmī, while we watched with indifference. You killed our friend who was acting wildly and using bad words like a drunkard."

Text 77.19

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
vṛthā tvaṁ katthase manda na paśyasy antike ’ntakam
paurusaṁ darśayanti sma śūrā na bahu-bhāṣiṇaḥ

The Supreme Lord said: O dullard, you boast in vain, since you fail to see death standing near you. Real heroes do not talk much but rather show their prowess in action.

COMMENTARY: You boast. That is suitable for you since you are a fool (manda). His foolishness is shown. Because of approaching death, you should not boast. You are certainly not a warrior. A warrior shows prowess. This is well known (vai).

Text 77.20

ity uktvā bhagavāñ chālvaṁ gadayā bhīma-vegayā
tatāḍa jatrau saṁrabdhaḥ sa cakampe vamann asṛk

Having said this, the furious Lord swung his club with frightening power and speed and hit Śālva on the collarbone, making him tremble and vomit blood.

COMMENTARY: Śālva (saḥ) trembled and vomited blood.

Text 77.21

gadāyāṁ sannivṛttāyāṁ śālvas tv antaradhīyata
tato muhūrta āgatya puruṣaḥ śirasācyutam
devakyā prahito ’smīti natvā prāha vaco rudan

But as soon as Kṛṣṇa withdrew his club, Śālva disappeared from sight, and a moment later a man approached the Lord. Bowing his head down to him, he announced, “Devakī has sent me,” and, sobbing, spoke the following words.

COMMENTARY: When Kṛṣṇa again took the club in his hand, Śālva disappeared. Immediately some person, a famous servant of Vasudeva, appeared. His words have another meaning. “I have not been sent by Devakī.” His words were not at all true.

Text 77.22

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-bāho pitā te pitṛ-vatsala
baddhvāpanītaḥ śālvena saunikena yathā paśuḥ

[The man said:] O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, mighty-armed one, who are so affectionate to your parents! Śālva has seized your father and taken him away, as a butcher leads an animal to slaughter.

COMMENTARY: O person famous as Kṛṣṇa! He repeats his name to imitate fear. O great warrior (mahābāho)! Your father has been tied up and taken away by Śālva. This is most improper. And you are affectionate to your father. He says this to produce lamentation in Kṛṣṇa. He has been taken with disrespect or with intent to harm him (apa-nītaḥ). It is not possible for your father to free himself. He gives an example of an animal led away by the butcher in order to induce more lamentation. The other meaning is as follows. Instead of pitā the word can be taken as apitā. Someone who is not your father, but similar, made by illusion, has been taken away.

Text 77.23

niśamya vipriyaṁ kṛṣṇo mānusīṁ prakṛtiṁ gataḥ
vimanasko ghṛṇī snehād babhāṣe prākṛto yathā

When he heard this disturbing news, Kṛṣṇa, who was playing the role of a mortal man, showed sorrow and compassion, and out of love for his parents he spoke the following words like an ordinary conditioned soul.

COMMENTARY: Though he was Svayam Bhagavān (kṛṣṇaḥ), he was overcome with grief, with the nature (prakṛtim) of a human being. He was feeling compassion for his father. Out of affection, like a material person, he spoke to himself.

Text 77.24

kathaṁ rāmam asambhrāntaṁ jitvājeyaṁ surāsuraiḥ
śālvenālpīyasā nītaḥ pitā me balavān vidhiḥ

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Balarāma is ever vigilant, and no devatā or demon can defeat him. So how could this insignificant Śālva defeat him and abduct my father? Indeed, fate is all-powerful!

COMMENTARY: Balarāma is ever vigilant (asambhrāntam). How can my father be taken by Śālva who is insignificant (alpīyasā) in comparison to

Balarāma? Though it is impossible, it has been made possible by the will of the Lord. In lamentation he says “Fate is strong.”

Text 77.25

iti bruvāṇe govinde saubha-rāṭ pratyupasthitaḥ
vasudevam ivānīya kṛṣṇaṁ cedam uvāca saḥ

After Govinda spoke these words, the master of Saubha again appeared, apparently leading Vasudeva before the Lord. Śālva then spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY: Sālva again appeared, coming close. “What did he do?” He brought some form looking like Vasudeva.

Text 77.26

eṣa te janitā tāto yad-artham iha jīvasi
vadhiṣye vīkṣatas te ’mum īśaś cet pāhi bāliśa

[Śālva said:] Here is your dear father, who begot you and for whose sake you are living in this world. I shall now kill him before your very eyes. Save him if you can, weakling!

COMMENTARY: Here is the person who produced you (not the person who fed you). To create great lamentation, he explains Kṛṣṇa’s relationship with his father: for him you live. As a good son, you should give up your life for him. I will kill him while you watch (te vīkṣataḥ). O fool! You do not know my power.

His words have another meaning. This is not your father (ajānitā, atātaḥ) on account of whom you show your strength (artham) to me. While you see my trick with curiosity, I will kill this form, for I am capable (īśaḥ) of doing this. The word cet is used for emphasis. A similar example is found in the following sentence with dhatte padaṁ tvam avitā yadi vighna-mūrdhni: the devotee is able to step over the head of whatever obstacle the devatās place before him. (SB 11.4.10) O lord who can reduce fools like me (bāliśa)! Deliver me from saṁsāra since you are completely independent (īśa).

Text 77.27

evaṁ nirbhartsya māyāvī khaḍgenānakadundubheḥ
utkṛtya śira ādāya kha-sthaṁ saubhaṁ samāviśat

After he had mocked the Lord in this way, the magician Śālva appeared to cut off Vasudeva's head with his sword. Taking the head with him, he entered the Saubha vehicle, which was hovering in the sky.

COMMENTARY: He cut off the head of the form appearing to be Vasudeva. Instead of utkṛtya (cutting off) sometimes utpāṭya (fallen off) is seen.

Text 77.28

tato muhūrtaṁ prakṛtāv upaplutaḥ
sva-bodha āste sva-janānuṣaṅgataḥ
mahānubhāvas tad abudhyad āsurīṁ
māyāṁ sa śālva-prasṛtāṁ mayoditām

By nature Kṛṣṇa is full in knowledge, and he possesses unlimited powers of perception. Yet for a moment, out of great affection for his loved ones, he remained absorbed in the mood of an ordinary human being. He soon recalled, however, that this was all a demoniac illusion engineered by Maya Dānava and employed by Śālva.

COMMENTARY: Śālva cut off his head and took it away because it was only an illusion created by Śālva. How did he get this power? It was taught by Maya.

Text 77.29

na tatra dūtaṁ na pituḥ kalevaraṁ
prabuddha ājau samapaśyad acyutaḥ
svāpnaṁ yathā cāmbara-cāriṇaṁ ripuṁ
saubha-stham ālokya nihantum udyataḥ

Now alert to the actual situation, the Lord with indestructible knowledge saw before him on the battlefield neither the messenger nor his father's body. It was as if he had awakened from a dream. Seeing his enemy flying above him in his Saubha plane, the Lord then prepared to kill him.

COMMENTARY: He awakened, and did not see the messenger or his father's body. He awoke because he possessed indestructible knowledge (acyutaḥ).

Text 77.30

evaṁ vadanti rājarṣe ṛṣayaḥ kecanānvitāḥ
yat sva-vāco virudhyeta nūnaṁ te na smaranty uta

Such is the account given by some sages, O wise King, but those who speak in this illogical way are contradicting themselves, having forgotten their own previous statements.

COMMENTARY: Some sages speak but illogically since their words are contradictory. They do not investigate. Nūnam indicates conjecture or certainty.

Text 77.31

kva śoka-mohau sneho vā bhayaṁ vā ye 'jña-sambhavāḥ
kva cākhaṇḍita-vijñāna-jñānaiśvaryas tv akhaṇḍitaḥ

How can lamentation, bewilderment, material affection or fear, all born out of ignorance, be ascribed to the infinite Supreme Lord, whose perception, knowledge and power are all similarly infinite?

COMMENTARY: Moha means ignorance. Actually, the Lord is devoid of lamentation and ignorance and possesses continuous knowledge, since he is the Lord of śuddha-sattva.

Text 77.32

yat-pāda-sevorjitayātma-vidyayā
hinvanty anādyātma-viparyaya-graham
labhanta ātmīyam anantam aiśvaraṁ
kuto nu mohaḥ paramasya sad-gateḥ

By virtue of self-realization fortified by service rendered to his feet, devotees of the Lord dispel the bodily concept of life, which has bewildered the soul for time without beginning. Thus they attain eternal glory in his personal association. How, then, can that Supreme Truth, the destination of all genuine saints, be subject to illusion?

COMMENTARY: By service to his feet and realization of one's true nature (ātma-vidyayā), devotees destroy knowledge which is opposite to their svarūpa. They attain liberation with the realization of their svarūpa

(ātmīyam) and Vaikuṇṭha (aiśvaryam) which is unlimited, infinite like the form of the Lord, though it is a planet. How can the Supreme Lord have ignorance (mohaḥ)? It is not possible that he began worrying on seeing bad omens. The Lord is attainable by the devotees, or the devotees not interesting in liberation (sad-gateḥ). Since he has a body of eternity, knowledge and bliss, it is not possible for Śālva to pierce his arm. Thus there is no contradiction in this episode.

Since Balarāma took permission from the elder Kurus when he departed, according to the Sabhā-parva, it is not contradictory. Though Baladeva departed for Dvārakā first, it is possible he arrived at Dvārakā with Kṛṣṇa. If Balarāma had been present in Dvārakā, it would seem improper that he let Pradyumna do the main fighting while he was present. Even materialists see no contradiction in this situation. What to speak of Vaiśampānaya and others being ignorant concerning this.

Seeing omens and other actions were just pastimes. It is not contradictory. Since the Lord has his internal intentions it is difficult for others to understand such contradictions. That was expressed in the previous verse by Śukadeva. By saying the Lord has infallible knowledge and is also subject to lamentation, the words would be self-contradictory and would arise only from ignorance. By understanding the details, some persons obtain knowledge. Those who were previously controlled by māyā later become controlled by the sweetness of the supreme being. They are then among those who have crossed saṁsāra. (These are the persons mentioned in the verse. Still they apparently show material emotions.)

An example of such a person is Prahlāda. On seeing the suffering of the materialists, he revealed his sorrow to Nṛsiṁhadeva. At the beginning of the story of Brahmā's bewilderment, Śukadeva was bewildered. Bharata became merciful and affectionate to King Rahūgaṇa, who knew nothing of the Lord. The Kumāras described their fear caused by the curse of the door keepers to the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. The Lord himself in the Dāmodara pastime established these contrary displays (such as being controlled by his mother though he is the controller) by showing that his nature is to be merciful to the devotees. Śukadeva also describes elsewhere:

tān vīkṣya kṛṣṇaḥ sakalābhaya-prado
hy ananya-nāthān sva-karād avacyutān
dīnāṁś ca mṛtyor jaṭharāgni-ghāsān
ghṛṇārdito diṣṭa-kṛtena vismitaḥ

Kṛṣṇa, the giver of fearlessness to all beings, saw that all the cowherd boys, who did not know anyone but him as their shelter, had now escaped from his hand and were helpless, where now suffering, like straws to be burned by the fire of the abdomen of Aghāsura, who was death personified. Bewildered by his affection, he was astonished by what been arranged by his appointed śakti. SB 10.12.27

Similarly in order to protect the Yadus, he fought with Śālva and showed various emotions. Though he appears to be bewildered by the māyā of demons, one should not think that he can be subject to lamentation and ignorance. There are verses of course like the following:

tato vatsān adṛṣṭvaitya puline 'pi ca vatsapān
ubhāv api vane kṛṣṇo vicikāya samantataḥ

Thereafter, when Kṛṣṇa was unable to find the calves, he returned to the bank of the river, but there he was also unable to see the cowherd boys. Thus he began to search for both the calves and the boys everywhere in the forest. SB 10.13.16

This is a description of Brahmā's māyā. It should be understood that the Lord, by his own desire, accepted this position of bewilderment in order to have pleasing pastimes with his great devotee Brahmā. Because of the Lord's infallible position, this verse says hinvanty anādyātma-viparyaya-graham: they destroy knowledge opposite to their svarūpa by serving the Lord's feet.

Thus verses 28 and 29 have another meaning. For some time Kṛṣṇa became absorbed in remembrance (anusaṅgataḥ) of Vasudeva (svajana) because of that imitation (tataḥ), while he remained omniscient (svabodhaḥ) in his svarūpa (prakṛtau). He remained aloof from illusion because he had great powers of perception (mahānubhāvaḥ). He did not see the illusion after that (verse 29). An example is given. A person of discrimination even while sleeping thinks, "This is a dream." Thus he does not accept things related to dreams.

Text 77.33

taṁ śastra-pūgaiḥ praharantam ojasā
śālvaṁ śaraiḥ śaurir amogha-vikramaḥ
viddhvācchinad varma dhanuḥ śiro-maṇiṁ
saubhaṁ ca śatror gadayā ruroja ha

While Śālva continued to hurl torrents of weapons at him with great force, Kṛṣṇa, whose prowess never fails, shot his arrows at Śālva, wounding him and shattering his armor, bow and crest jewel. Then, with his club the Lord smashed his enemy's Saubha airship.

COMMENTARY: After purifying the ignorant misconceptions of the previous verses, Śukadeva continues the description with the proper view. Kṛṣṇa shattered Śalva's armor, bow and then his crest jewel to step by step shatter his pride since Śālva was an enemy. Ha expresses joy.

Text 77.34

tat kṛṣṇa-hasteritayā vicūrṇitaṁ
papāta toye gadayā sahasradhā
visṛjya tad bhū-talam āsthito gadām
udyamya śālvo 'cyutam abhyagād drutam

Shattered into thousands of pieces by Kṛṣṇa's club, the Saubha airship plummeted into the water. Śālva abandoned it, stationed himself on the ground, took up his club and rushed toward Acyuta.

COMMENTARY: Tat refers to the vehicle. Toye means "in the ocean."

Text 77.35

ādhāvataḥ sa-gadaṁ tasya bāhuṁ
bhallena chittvātha rathāṅgam adbhutam
vadhāya śālvasya layārka-sannibhaṁ
bibhrad babhau sārka ivodayācalaḥ

As Śālva rushed at him, the Lord shot a dart and cut off his arm that held the club. Having finally decided to kill Śālva, Kṛṣṇa then raised his Sudarśana disc weapon, which resembled the sun at the time of universal annihilation. The brilliantly shining Lord appeared like the easternmost mountain bearing the rising sun.

COMMENTARY: The astonishing cakra is described. It was like the sun at the time of devastation. Kṛṣṇa took up (bibhrat) the cakra to kill Śālva. To kill a demon the cakra took on great effulgence. Even while fighting, the Lord appeared most beautiful.

Text 77.36

jahāra tenaiva śiraḥ sa-kuṇḍalaṁ
kirīṭa-yuktaṁ puru-māyino hariḥ
vajreṇa vṛtrasya yathā purandaro
babhūva hāheti vacas tadā nṛṇām

Employing his disc, the Lord removed that great magician's head with its earrings and crown, just as Purandara had used his thunderbolt to cut off Vṛtra's head. Seeing this, people shouted in amazement.

COMMENTARY: The Lord cut off the head of the demon endowed with great illusions (puru-māyinaḥ), dragging the head in front of his troops. The Lord did this with the head's crown and earrings intact, to show his skill. People shouted out of great amazement.

Text 77.37

tasmin nipatite pāpe saubhe ca gadayā hate
nedur dundubhayo rājan divi deva-gaṇeritāḥ
sakhīnām apacitiṁ kurvan dantavakro ruṣābhyagāt

With the sinful Śālva now dead and his Saubha airship destroyed, the heavens resounded with kettledrums played by groups of devatās. Then Dantavakra came to perform funeral rites as a favor to his friend.

COMMENTARY: Śālva fell down, completely dead (nipatite). His condition could not be reversed. The vehicle was also destroyed. Dantavakra came there to honor Śālva with death rites (apacitim), showing gratitude for a person of similar hatred for the Lord. He was foolish in doing this since he was angry.

Chapter Seventy-eight
The Killing of Dantavakra, Vidūratha and Romaharṣaṇa

Text 78.1–2

śrī-śuka uvāca
śiśupālasya śālvasya pauṇḍrakasyāpi durmatiḥ
para-loka-gatānāṁ ca kurvan pārokṣya-sauhṛdam
ekaḥ padātiḥ saṅkruddho gadā-pāṇiḥ prakampayan
padbhyām imāṁ mahā-rāja mahā-sattvo vyadṛśyata

TRANSLATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Acting out of friendship for Śiśupāla, Śālva and Pauṇḍraka, who had all passed on to the next world, the wicked Dantavakra appeared on the battlefield in a great rage, O King. All alone, on foot and wielding a club in his hand, the mighty warrior shook the earth with his footsteps.

COMMENTARY: With great strength or huge body (mahā-sattvaḥ) he shook the earth (imām) with his footsteps. He was seen (vyadṛśyata) by the Lord.

Text 78.3

taṁ tathāyāntam ālokya gadām ādāya satvaraḥ
avaplutya rathāt kṛṣṇaḥ sindhuṁ veleva pratyadhāt

Seeing Dantavakra approach, Kṛṣṇa quickly picked up his club, jumped down from his chariot and stopped his advancing opponent just as the shore holds back the ocean.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa jumped from his chariot because according to dharma he should fight with his opponent who was on foot in the same manner. Instead of ādāya sometimes udyamya (took up) is seen.

Text 78.4

gadām udyamya kārūṣo mukundaṁ prāha durmadaḥ
diṣṭyā diṣṭyā bhavān adya mama dṛṣṭi-pathaṁ gataḥ

Raising his club, the reckless Dantavakra said to Lord Mukunda, "What luck! What luck—to have you come before me today!

COMMENTARY: Dantavakra was born in Karūṣa province (kārūṣaḥ).

Text 78.5

tvaṁ mātuleyo naḥ kṛṣṇa mitra-dhruṅ māṁ jighāṁsasi
atas tvāṁ gadayā manda haniṣye vajra-kalpayā

"You are our maternal cousin, Kṛṣṇa, but you committed violence against my friends, and now you want to kill me also. Therefore, fool, I will kill you with my thunderbolt club.

COMMENTARY: Dantavakra's mother was Śrutadevī, sister of Vasudeva. Thus Kṛṣṇa was his cousin from his mother's side (mātuleyaḥ). But you killed my friends. You desire to kill me. O fool (manda)! But there is another meaning. You desire to accept me, though I attack your friends. O intelligent one (amanda)! I will attain you by means of your Kaumadakī club, which shines like a diamond (vajra-kalpayā).

Text 78.6

tarhy ānṛṇyam upaimy ajña mitrāṇāṁ mitra-vatsalaḥ
bandhu-rūpam ariṁ hatvā vyādhiṁ deha-caraṁ yathā

"Then, O unintelligent one, I who am affectionate to my friends will have repaid my debt to them by killing you, my enemy disguised as a relative, who is like a disease within my body."

COMMENTARY: It is necessary that I repay my debts. I will kill you who appear to be a friend but are actually a great enemy (bandhu-rūpam). You are like a disease, causing great suffering to my body. The real meaning is as follows. Having known (hatvā) you, an enemy, as a friend, dwelling within the body (deha-caram), thought of in the mind (vyādhim), I will repay my debts. Or, having known you, who destroy all mental suffering (vyādhim) since you are antaryāmī (deha-caram), I will repay my debts.

Text 78.7

evaṁ rūkṣais tudan vākyaiḥ kṛṣṇaṁ totrair iva dvipam
gadayātāḍayan mūrdhni siṁha-vad vyanadac ca saḥ

Thus trying to harass Kṛṣṇa with harsh words, as one might prick an elephant with sharp goads, Dantavakra struck the Lord on the head with his club and roared like a lion.

COMMENTARY: He spoke harsh words like goads on an elephant. The words did not cause any inner pain to the Lord.

Text 78.8

gadayābhihato 'py ājau na cacāla yadūdvahaḥ
kṛṣṇo 'pi tam ahan gurvyā kaumodakyā stanāntare

Although hit by Dantavakra's club, Kṛṣṇa, the deliverer of the Yadus, did not budge from his place on the battlefield. Rather, with his massive Kaumodakī club the Lord struck Dantavakra in the middle of his chest.

COMMENTARY: Hit by his club in the fighting (ājau), the chief of the Yadus did not fall since he was Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa.

Text 78.9

gadā-nirbhinna-hṛdaya udvaman rudhiraṁ mukhāt
prasārya keśa-bāhv-aṅghrīn dharaṇyāṁ nyapatad vyasuḥ

His heart shattered by the club's blow, Dantavakra vomited blood and fell lifeless to the ground, his hair disheveled and his arms and legs sprawling.

COMMENTARY: The phrase keśa-bāhv-aṅghrīn in the plural instead of the dual is poetic license. Instead of gadā sometimes gāḍha is seen.

Text 78.10

tataḥ sūkṣmataraṁ jyotiḥ kṛṣṇam āviśad adbhutam
paśyatāṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ yathā caidya-vadhe nṛpa

A most subtle and wondrous spark of light then [rose from the demon's body and] entered Lord Kṛṣṇa while everyone looked on, O King, just as when Śiśupāla was killed.

COMMENTARY: From his body (tataḥ) a light which could not be seen by the eyes or other senses, very small in size, entered Kṛṣṇa. When Śiśupāla died, it is said ulkeva bhuvi khāc cyutā: he was like a meteor falling from the sky

to the earth. (SB 10.74.45) Since it could not be seen by the eye it was extraordinary (adbhutam). But all the people saw it directly. By the Lord's will, they could see it. In astonishment Śukadeva called to Parīkṣit. As associate of the Lord, his death was similar to Śiśupāla's. This means that Dantavakra also entered the spiritual world as the Lord's devotee again.

Text 78.11

vidūrathas tu tad-bhrātā bhrātṛ-śoka-pariplutaḥ
āgacchad asi-carmābhyām ucchvasaṁs taj-jighāṁsayā

But then Dantavakra's brother Vidūratha, immersed in sorrow over his brother's death, came forward breathing heavily, sword and shield in hand. He wanted to kill the Lord.

COMMENTARY: The word tu indicates that this Vidūratha, brother of Dantavakra, was not considered a Yādava.

Text 78.12

tasya cāpatataḥ kṛṣṇaś cakreṇa kṣura-neminā
śiro jahāra rājendra sa-kirīṭaṁ sa-kuṇḍalam

O best of kings, as Vidūratha fell upon him, Kṛṣṇa used his razor-edged Sudarśana disc to remove his head, complete with its helmet and earrings.

COMMENTARY: When he rushed forward (āpatataḥ), Kṛṣṇa cut off his head.

Text 78.13–15

evaṁ saubhaṁ ca śālvaṁ ca dantavakraṁ sahānujam
hatvā durviṣahān anyair īḍitaḥ sura-mānavaiḥ
munibhiḥ siddha-gandharvair vidyādhara-mahoragaiḥ
apsarobhiḥ pitṛ-gaṇair yakṣaiḥ kinnara-cāraṇaiḥ
upagīyamāna-vijayaḥ kusumair abhivarṣitaḥ
vṛtaś ca vṛṣṇi-pravarair viveśālaṅkṛtāṁ purīm

Having thus destroyed Śālva and his Saubha airship, along with Dantavakra and his younger brother, all of whom were invincible before any other opponent, the Lord was praised by devatās, human beings and great sages, by Siddhas, Gandharvas, Vidyādharas and great snakes, and

also by Apsarās, Pitṛs, Yakṣas, Kinnaras and Cāraṇas. As they sang his glories and showered him with flowers, the Supreme Lord entered his festively decorated capital city in the company of the most eminent Vṛṣṇis.

COMMENTARY: After killing the demons, though they had intolerable prowess, Kṛṣṇa was worshipped by others. He was praised by devatās and men with cries of "Victory! Victory!" His victory of Śālva and others was sung by the sages and others. They all sprinkled him with flowers completely. He was surrounded by the Vṛṣṇis, who had previously come to fight, such as Pradyumna, who now approached him after all the demons had been killed. He was surrounded also by Vasudeva, Balarāma, Ugrasena and others. He entered the city which was naturally decorated, or was especially decorated after the killing of the great demons. The details concerning the killing of Dantavakra are given in the Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa:

atha śiśupālaṁ nihataṁ śrutvā dantavakraḥ kṛṣṇena saha yoddhuṁ mathurām ājagāma,
kṛṣṇas tu tac chrutvā ratham āruhya mathurām āyayau tayor dantavakra-vāsudevayor aho-rātraṁ mathurā-dvāri saṅgrāmaḥ samavartata, kṛṣṇas tu gadayā taṁ jaghāna sa tu cūrṇita-sarvāṅgo vajra-nirbhinno mahīdhara iva gatāsur avani-tale nipapāta so 'pi hareḥ sārūpyeṇa yogi-gamyaṁ nityānanda-sukha-daṁ śāśvataṁ paramaṁ padam avāpa | itthaṁ jaya-vijayau sanakādi-śāpa-vyājena kevalaṁ bhagavato līlārthaṁ saṁsṛtāv avatīrya janma-traye 'pi tenaiva nihatau janma-trayāvasāne muktim avāpatuḥ

Then, hearing that Śiśupāla had been killed, Dantavakra went to Mathurā to fight against Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa, moreover, heard of this, he mounted his chariot and went to Mathurā. Between the two of them—Dantavakra and Vāsudeva—there then began a battle at the gate of Mathurā that lasted all day and night. Finally Kṛṣṇa struck Dantavakra with his club, at which point Dantavakra fell lifeless to the ground, all his limbs smashed like a mountain shattered by a lightning bolt. Dantavakra achieved the liberation of gaining a form like the Lord's, and thus he also achieved the Lord's eternal, supreme abode, attainable by perfect yogīs, which bestows the happiness of everlasting spiritual bliss. So it was that Jaya and Vijaya—

apparently because of being cursed by Sanaka and his brothers but actually to facilitate the Supreme Lord's pastimes—descended to this material world and in three consecutive lifetimes were killed by the Lord himself. Then, at the completion of these three lifetimes, they attained liberation.

One should not think that this version is from another kalpa. Correlation between the two stories should be made. It is said that after Śālva was killed, Dantavakra immediately came there to pay his debt to his friends. Previously informed of Pauṇḍraka's death, on understanding that Śiśupāla had been killed, in great anger he immediately left his province and came to Indraprastha (where Śiśupāla was killed by Kṛṣṇa.) He wandered about at that place alone, holding his club, making the earth tremble, like a fierce animal, an ocean, a mountain struch by lightning. By worship of Śiva, immediately he had attained the power of Hiraṇyākṣa.

As Śukadeva has said, he had a wicked mind. He thought of how Kṛṣṇa took the advice of Uddhava to kill Jarāsandha. He thought that Kṛṣṇa had strength only through his cakra. He then took up his club with the aim of single combat, understanding that Balarāma and Bhīma were skillful at using the club. He came to Mathurā to challenge Kṛṣṇa to single combat and attack him. Then from Nārada he heard that Kṛṣṇa had gone to Dvārakā and killed Śālva. He was eager to go there. But Kṛṣṇa, after killing Śālva, came to Mathurā as quick as the mind travels, on his chariot. Dantavakra came out of Mathurā to meet him. At this time Kṛṣṇa saw him coming, in an angry mood. Then he killed Dantavakra. The gate of Mathurā facing Dvārakā is called Dantavakra-ha or in the local dialect it is called Datiha. A village where Vajra lived remains there. Though Vidūratha did not come with Dantavakra because of some disagreement, he came later out of affection and seeing Dantavakra dead, he fell like a moth into a fire (he merged into Kṛṣṇa). Padma Purāṇa describes events after this also.

Kṛṣṇa, after killing Vidūratha, crossed the Yamunā and came to Vraja. He greeted his mother and father who longed to see him and comforted them. With tears in their throats, they embraced him. He offered respects to all the elder cowherds and comforted them. He gave them all cloth and ornaments in profusion. Thus it is said:

kālindyāḥ puline ramye puṇya-vṛkṣa-samāvṛte
gopa-nārībhir aniśaṁ krīḍayāmāsa keśavaḥ

Kṛṣṇa constantly played with the gopīs on the bank of the Yamunā covered with pure trees. Padma Purāṇa

By his desire he could manifest many powers, as seen in Brahmā's stealing of the cowherd boys. Thus all wealth, with lots of clothing, immediately appeared since he was the Lord of Lakṣmī. His coming to Vraja is also approved by Bhāgavatam:

tās tathā tapyatīr vīkṣya sva-prasthāne yadūttamaḥ
sāntvayām āsa sa-premair āyāsya iti dautyakaiḥ

As he departed, that best of the Yadus saw how the gopīs, were lamenting, and thus he consoled them by sending a messenger with this loving promise: "I will return." SB 10.39.35

yāta yūyaṁ vrajaṁ tāta vayaṁ ca sneha-duḥkhitān
jñātīn vo draṣṭum eṣyāmo vidhāya suhṛdāṁ sukham

Now you should all return to Vraja, dear father. We shall come to see you, our dear relatives who suffer in separation from us, as soon as we have given some happiness to your well-wishing friends. SB 10.45.23

hatvā kaṁsaṁ raṅga-madhye pratīpaṁ sarva-sātvatām
yad āha vaḥ samāgatya kṛṣṇaḥ satyaṁ karoti tat

Having killed Kaṁsa, the enemy of all the Yadus, in the wrestling arena, Kṛṣṇa will now surely fulfill his promise to you by coming back. SB 10.46.35

āgamiṣyaty adīrgheṇa kālena vrajam acyutaḥ
priyaṁ vidhāsyate pitror bhagavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ

Infallible Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the devotees, will soon return to Vraja to satisfy his parents. SB 10.46.34

Through his own mouth and the mouths of his devotees, he has made many vows, which could not be ignored. īśvarāṇāṁ vacaḥ satyam: the words of the devotee are true. (SB 10.33.31) If he satisfied the request of Akrūra and Kubjā to come to their houses, when they asked only once, would he not fulfill his promise to the people of Vraja? Not only that, he actually came, as stated in the Bhāgavatam:

yarhy ambujākṣāpasasāra bho bhavān
kurūn madhūn vātha suhṛd-didṛkṣayā
tatrābda-koṭi-pratimaḥ kṣaṇo bhaved
raviṁ vinākṣṇor iva nas tavācyuta

O lotus-eyed Lord, whenever you go away to Mathurā, Vṛndāvana or Hastināpura to meet your friends and relatives, every moment of your absence seems like a million years. O infallible one, at that time our eyes become useless, as if bereft of sun. SB 1.11.9

The people of Vraja remained there within Mathurā district, though all the people of Mathurā were brought to Dvārakā. Desiring to see these people of Vraja (madhūn), Kṛṣṇa went there. It is logical to conclude that Kṛṣṇa went at this particular time. The people of Vraja were also convinced that he would now return, since he had completed killing the demons. Uddhava said that Kṛṣṇa would give happiness to his friends in Vraja. Now, by having defeated countless enemies, the people of Vraja were certain that he would return. When the people of Vraja went to meet him during the eclipse at Kurukṣetra, this return, accepted as a traditional pastime, will be discussed. The Lord himself says:

api smaratha naḥ sakhyaḥ svānām artha-cikīrṣayā
gatāṁś cirāyitāñ chatru-pakṣa-kṣapaṇa-cetasaḥ

My dear girlfriends, do you still remember me? It was for my relatives' sake that I stayed away so long, intent on destroying my enemies. SB 10.82.41

This return to Vraja is not mentioned in other Purāṇas because of the method of secret or indirect reference which is preferred by the sages (parokṣa-vāda)[1]. In this case indirect statements are used to hide the confidential pastimes from the materialists and to test the eagerness of the devotees. Though his return is not mentioned in many Purāṇas, the proof still exists in some places. Though Śukadeva has directly described the bewilderment of Brahmā, stealing the gopīs' clothing and Kṛṣṇa's eating dirt, he indirectly mentions Kṛṣṇa's return.

Tat-smāritānanta-hṛtākhilendriyaḥ: Śukadeva Gosvāmī, immediately remembering subject matters about Kṛṣṇa within the core of his heart, externally lost contact with the actions of his senses. (SB 10.12.44) Sometimes Śukadeva would faint. Sometimes he could say what he wanted

to say and sometimes not. Sometimes he describes pastimes in the wrong order. Though the meeting in Kurukṣetra took place before the killing of Dantavakra, it is mentioned much later. Baladeva returned from pilgrimage after the Kurukṣetra war when all the Kauravas were dead. Duryodhana was killed after that. For the eclipse in Kurukṣetra however, Bhīṣma, Droṇa and others came. The order is as follows. First the eclipse at Kurukṣetra occurred, then the Rājasūya sacrifice, then the gambling match, then exile of the Pāṇḍavas, then killing of Śālva and Dantavakra, and finally his return to Vraja. When the Pāṇḍavas returned from the forest, Balarāma was on a pilgrimage. The journey to the eclipse at Kurukṣetra took place not too long after Kṛṣṇa had killed Kaṁsa, for it is said at Kurukṣetra when Vasudeva speaks to Kuntī:

kaṁsa-pratāpitāḥ sarve vayaṁ yātā diśaṁ diśam
etarhy eva punaḥ sthānaṁ daivenāsāditāḥ svasaḥ

Harassed by Kaṁsa, we all fled in various directions, but by the grace of Providence we have now finally been able to return to our homes, my dear sister. SB 10.82.21

Also Draupadī sees Rukmiṇī and the other queens at the Kurukṣetra eclipse for the first time and asks about their marriages to Kṛṣṇa. From the following statement concerning the gathering at Kurukṣetra, it would appear that it took place some time later, since Aniruddha was mature. āste ’niruddho rakṣāyāṁ kṛtavarmā ca yūtha-paḥ: Aniruddha remained in Dvārakā with Sucandra, Śuka and Sāraṇa to guard the city, together with Kṛtavarmā, the commander of their armed forces. SB 10.82.6

However it is also said:

nāti-dīrgheṇa kālena sa kārṣṇi rūḍha-yauvanaḥ
janayām āsa nārīṇāṁ vīkṣantīnāṁ ca vibhramam

After a short time, this son of Kṛṣṇa—Pradyumna—attained his full youth. He enchanted all women who gazed upon him. SB 10.55.9

It did not take long for Aniruddha to mature. Therefore the promise that Uddhava gave is true. Āgamiṣyaty adīrgheṇa kālena vrajam acyutaḥ: infallible Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the devotees, will soon return to Vraja. (SB 10.46.34) At the end of the Tenth Canto, the son of Kṛṣṇa named Aniruddha (not his grandson) is described as a great warrior. (SB 10.89.30)

Thus the Aniruddha who stayed in Dvārakā while the others went to Kurukṣetra could also be this person.

Padma Purāṇa clearly mentions Kṛṣṇa's return to Vraja. Also another confidential matter is mentioned there.

ramya-keli-sukhenaiva gopa-veṣa-dharo hariḥ
baddha-prema-rasenātra māsa-dvayam uvāsa ha

atha tatrasthā nandādayaḥ sarve janāḥ putra-dāra-sahitāḥ paśu-pakṣi-mṛgādayaś ca vāsudeva-prasādena divya-rūpa-dharā vimānam ārūḍhā parama-vaikuṇṭha-lokam avāpur iti

Dressed as a cowherd, with happiness in his attractive pastimes, he spent two months absorbed in the rasa of prema. Then Nanda and the others, along with their sons and wives, the cows, animals and birds, having even more resplendent forms by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, entered an airplane and went to the supreme Vaikuṇṭha.

māsa-dvayam uvāsa ha means that he clearly (ha) stayed two months. Divya-rūpa-dharā means that more that previously their forms became resplendent because of the most intense bliss. As gopa and gopī associates, they were established in their eternal pastimes by going to Vaikuṇṭha.

This place was previously described. Darśayām āsa lokaṁ svaṁ gopānāṁ tamasaḥ param: Kṛṣṇa revealed to the cowherd men his abode, which is beyond material darkness. SB 10.28.14

nandādayas tu taṁ dṛṣṭvā paramānanda-nivṛtāḥ
kṛṣṇaṁ ca tatra cchandobhiḥ stūyamānaṁ su-vismitāḥ

Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherd men felt the greatest happiness when they saw that Goloka. They were especially amazed to see Kṛṣṇa himself there, surrounded by the personified Vedas, who were offering him prayers. SB 10.28.17

Thus they were taken by Kṛṣṇa to his own planet.

vatsair vatsatarībhiś ca sadā krīḍati mādhavaḥ
vṛndāvanāntara-gataḥ sa-rāmo bālakair vṛtaḥ

Kṛṣṇa eternally plays with the calves and cows along with Balarāma and his friends within Vṛndāvana. Skanda Purāṇa.

Thus, not only Kṛṣṇa resides in Goloka but Balarāṁa, Rohiṇī and others as well. He previously showed the residents of Vraja this place because it was said na veda svāṁ gatiṁ bhraman: the people do not know their real destination. (SB 10.28.13) Of course this place was present within Vṛndāvana. He had them all enter a huge chariot (to go there).

After the journey to Kurukṣetra, the people of Vraja crossed the Yamunā and lived far from Vṛndāvana because of grief. Thus it is said that after killing Dantavakra, Kṛṣṇa crossed the Yamunā. (One does not have to cross the Yamunā to go from Mathurā to Vṛndāvana.) The chariot, Dvārakā and other things came from Vaikuṇṭha. By the wish of the Lord the chariot appeared in this manner in order to show his powers to the devatās and devotees who have conceptions of the Lord's greatness. It appeared without anyone detecting where it came from, because of its speed and brightness, in order to astonish everyone. Other explanations are not acceptable.

It is described that they live in Gokula eternally. It is useless for them to go far away from Vraja and attain an eternal place like Vaikuṇṭha (as in the above description) according to the logic of "If you have honey in your cupboard, why go to the forest." All descriptions of attraction for Gokula and the indications of the longing of the people there for the Lord by Uddhava would be useless. Not only would they be useless but distasteful as well. It is explained that the people of Vraja went to Kurukṣetra with expectations of directly meeting Kṛṣṇa again. The Lord says:

mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām amṛtatvāya kalpate
diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho bhavatīnāṁ mad-āpanaḥ

Rendering devotional service to me qualifies any living being for eternal life. But by your good fortune you have developed a special loving attitude toward me, by which you have obtained me. SB 10.82.44

Śukadeva says gopīnāṁ sa gurur gatiḥ: Kṛṣṇa was the prominent goal for the gopīs. (SB 10.83.1)

The Lord says:

kevalena hi bhāvena gopyo gāvo nagā mṛgāḥ
ye ’nye mūḍha-dhiyo nāgāḥ siddhā mām īyur añjasā

The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, including the gopīs, cows, unmoving creatures such as the twin arjuna trees, animals, living entities with stunted consciousness such as bushes and thickets, and snakes such as Kāliya, all achieved the perfection of life by unalloyed love for me and thus very easily achieved me. SB 11.12.8

This refers to gopīs who were sādhakas not nitya-siddhas. First describing their attainment of him, Kṛṣṇa then describes the nitya-siddha gopīs who attained him after great separation. That they overcame that separation is confirmed in two verses:

rāmeṇa sārdhaṁ mathurāṁ praṇīte
śvāphalkinā mayy anurakta-cittāḥ
vigāḍha-bhāvena na me viyoga-
tīvrādhayo ’nyaṁ dadṛśuḥ sukhāya

The residents of Vṛndāvana, headed by the gopīs, were always completely attached to me with the deepest love. Therefore, when my uncle Akrūra brought my brother Balarāma and me to the city of Mathurā, the residents of Vṛndāvana suffered extreme mental distress because of separation from me and could not find any other source of happiness.

tās tāḥ kṣapāḥ preṣṭhatamena nītā
mayaiva vṛndāvana-gocareṇa
kṣaṇārdha-vat tāḥ punar aṅga tāsāṁ
hīnā mayā kalpa-samā babhūvuḥ

Dear Uddhava, all of those nights that the gopīs spent with me, their most dearly beloved, in the land of Vṛndāvana seemed to them to pass in less than a moment. Bereft of my association, however, the gopīs felt that those same nights dragged on forever, as if each night were equal to a day of Brahmā. SB 11.12.10-11

Before he came, he said:

mayi tāḥ preyasāṁ preṣṭhe dūra-sthe gokula-striyaḥ
smarantyo ’ṅga vimuhyanti virahautkaṇṭhya-vihvalāḥ

My dear Uddhava, for those women of Gokula I am the most cherished object of love. Thus when they remember me, who am so far away, they are overwhelmed by the anxiety of separation.

dhārayanty ati-kṛcchreṇa prāyaḥ prāṇān kathañcana
pratyāgamana-sandeśair ballavyo me mad-ātmikāḥ

Simply because I have promised to return to them, my fully devoted cowherd girlfriends struggle to maintain their lives somehow or other. SB 10.46.5-6

He uses the present tense. But now, that condition has been overcome. The verses SB 11.12.10-11 means that previously the gopīs could not see any means of happiness but now they see it. Separation no longer exists. Without me, the nights dragged on forever, but now it is not like that because there is no separation. O Uddhava! This is because they possess me eternally since they entered the aprakaṭa manifestation of Vṛndāvana according to the message you gave them.

“According to what was said, the aprakaṭa manifestation exists in a particular manifestation of Vṛndāvana, called Goloka. Do the aprakaṭa and prakaṭa pastimes co-exist since they are so similar?” Because the prakaṭa pastimes and prakaṭa manifestation are non-different from the aprakaṭa pastimes and aprakṛṭa manifestation, the aprakaṭa pastimes and the aprakaṭa manifestation are finally achieved from the prakaṭa pastimes. This is seen in a later verse.

tā nāvidan mayy anuṣaṅga-baddha-
dhiyaḥ svam ātmānam adas tathedam
yathā samādhau munayo ’bdhi-toye
nadyaḥ praviṣṭā iva nāma-rūpe

Their minds bound by constant association with me, they were not aware of their bodies, of this world or the next world, just as sages in samādhi are not aware of the world, and just as rivers, on entering the ocean, lose their names and forms. SB 11.12.12

The meaning is this. These gopīs, because of intense longing in separation, experienced distinct mahābhāva, difficult to bear. They manifested the state called mahā-mohana on attaining me, who came to see them sometimes. Their intelligence became bound by that association. Thus they

did not know a sense of possessiveness or ego (svam ātmānam), and could not distinguish what were aprakaṭa pastimes (adaḥ) and parkaṭa pastimes (idam). They experienced the two as one. Because of non-difference with the pastimes of the prakaṭa manifestation with the aprakaṭa pastimes they did not see them as two. Names and forms entered into the aprakaṭa manifestation, since actually they are non-different in essence. An example is given to show non-difference of names and forms of the prakaṭa and aprakaṭa pastimes. In samādhi, when the pure ātmā appears, sages become unaware of distinctions. Just as rivers do not know the difference between their situation on land or in ocean water, but enter into both conditions, following the water of the ocean, the gopīs did not know the difference in the situation of the prakaṭa pastimes but entered into me. This example is used to indicate dissolution of awareness of the difference between the two types of pastimes, not the complete dissolution of awareness. Lokavat tu līlākaivalyam: the Lord becomes absorbed in pastimes as people do in this world. (Brahma-sūtra 2.1.33) Entering the aprakaṭa pastimes, they attained his form. It is said:

mat-kāmā ramaṇaṁ jāram asvarūpa-vido 'balāḥ
brahma māṁ paramaṁ prāpuḥ saṅgāc chata-sahasraśaḥ

All those hundreds of thousands of gopīs, desiring me, the supreme Brahman, not knowing my form of power, attained me, a lover who gave them pleasure because of association. SB 11.12.13

Śruti says ānando brahma. Thus the brahma mentioned in the above verse is a blissful form. Since the Lord is the shelter of all qualities, all the adjectives modify him, giving meaning in the order mentioned. In an expression like pacyantāṁ vividhāḥ pākāḥ: cook the various foods, milk products are also included. Thus the verse does not refer to only the last term, but the two previous terms (ramaṇam and jāram), just as a statement like the following must be taken in context, where an opposite meaning can be taken by taking the literal meaning. (It is exaggerated praise of the utensils for sacrifice). yasya parṇamayī juhūr bhavati na sa pāpaṁ ślokaṁ śṛṇoti: he who takes a ladle of parṇa wood hears no evil rumors about himself.

They attained me, Brahman. Others also, hundreds of thousands of sādhana-siddhas, because of association with the nitya-siddhas, who are my aṁśas, attained me. The difference between the two types was shown at the beginning of the rāsa dance. They attained the Lord because of association with the nitya-siddhas, because of developing similar bhāva. That was mentioned in SB 11.12.8 already quoted. It should be understood that there are two types of cows and other living beings also. Advaita-vādis attain impersonal Brahman according to Viṣṇu Purāṇa. The gopīs did not attain a form other than me, though there are many forms. The gopīs attained me (mām), my form as Svayam bhagavān, brahman in human form, the basis of Brahman. The gopīs are described as mat-kāmāḥ: desiring me.

mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām amṛtatvāya kalpate
diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho bhavatīnāṁ mad-āpanaḥ

Rendering devotional service to me qualifies any living being for eternal life. But by your good fortune you have developed a special loving attitude toward me, by which you have obtained me. SB 10.82.44

Rejecting the attainment of impersonal Brahman, he promises that they attain him directly. Darśayām āsa lokaṁ svaṁ gopānāṁ tamasaḥ param: Kṛṣṇa revealed to the cowherd men his abode, which is beyond material darkness. (SB 10.28.14)

The special nature of prema is understood from the fact that it is desired even by persons who desire liberation and those who are liberated. Vāñchanti yad bhava-bhiyo munayo vayaṁ ca: their pure love is hankered after by those who fear material existence, by great sages, and by ourselves as well. (SB 10.47.58) Thus all the people of Vraja attained Kṛṣṇa's own planet. This is shown in the Padma Purāṇa quotation, where it says that Nanda and all others including wives and children went to Goloka. So what to speak of the gopīs. They must have also gone.

Having shown the supremely excellent qualities because of his supreme form, endowed with bliss as Brahman, his supreme position as a lover is shown. In SB 11.12.13, mām means Svayam Bhagavān, indicating his most special nature. Having described the Lord's svarūpa, what was the relationship they attained with him? Their relationship is shown by the

adjective describing them. Mat-kāmāḥ ramaṇaṁ jāram asvarūpavidaḥ: desiring me, they attained me as a husband (ramaṇam) and as an illicit lover (jāram). This is the meaning of the words by convention. Rūḍhir yogam apaharati: conventional usage overrides etymological meaning. Therefore giving other meanings to the words ramaṇam and jāram is not suitable.

According to Viśva-prakāśa, ramaṇa means priya and according to Amara-koṣa priya means a husband. Jāra means upapati by convention. This is also according to Amara-koṣa. Another word synonymous with jāra is pāpa-pati according to Trikhāṇḍa-śeṣa. Therefore taking the conventional meaning of jāra (paramour) and the etymological meaning of ramaṇa (enjoyer) cannot be accepted (since the meaning is the same). The jāra is not a husband, and the husband is not a jāra. These two words are used to describe a relationship with the gopīs. Those who desired me did not know their forms (asvarūpa-vidaḥ). By the līlā-śakti, forgetting from birth their positions as eternal consorts, not knowing their true forms, they attained me while thinking of me as a paramour out of extreme attachment.

Desiring me (mat-kāmāḥ), how could they think of me as a paramour while I was a husband? For them, seeing me as a paramour dissolved, as in a dream and then they attained me as a husband (ramaṇam). Thinking of him as a lover other than their husband was an arrangement of vipralambha. Rati becomes excellent in vipralambha. He made this arrangement temporarily for for those that could tolerate, out of affection.

na vinā vipralambhena sambhogaḥ puṣṭim aśnute
kāṣāyite hi vastrādau bhūyān evābhivardhate

Sambhoga is not strong without vipralambha. It increases in strength just as cloth increase in beauty by repeatedly dying with red color. (Quoted in Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi 15.3)

The union is nourished by separation, just as color in cloth is strengthened by repeated dying. The union is not contradicted by separation. But if this is constantly repeated and heard by even one ear, it will cause a disturbance. One becomes exhausted with having to fast intensely in order to increase the appetite. In order to quell the disturbance, one attains the Lord as a husband. Otherwise pleasure will be completely destroyed.

nivārayāmaḥ samupetya mādhavaṁ
kiṁ no ’kariṣyan kula-vṛddha-bāndhavāḥ.

Let us directly approach Mādhava and stop him from going. What can our family elders and other relatives do to us? SB 10.39.28

visṛjya lajjāṁ ruruduḥ sma su-svaraṁ
govinda dāmodara mādhaveti

They forgot all shame and loudly cried out, “O Govinda! O Dāmodara! O Mādhava!” SB 10.39.31

tā man-manaskā tṛṣṭ-prāṇā mad-arthe tyakta-daihikāḥ

The minds of those gopīs are always absorbed in me, and their very lives are ever devoted to me. For my sake they have abandoned everything related to their bodies. SB 10.46.4

They gave up bodily considerations and shame on having seen a bee.

yā dustyajaṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-padavīṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām

The gopīs of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, sought by the Vedas. SB 10.47.61

mātaraṁ pitaraṁ bhrātṝn patīn putrān svasṝn api
yad-arthe jahima dāśārha dustyajān sva-janān prabho

For Kṛṣṇa’s sake, O descendant of Dāśārha, we abandoned our mothers, fathers, brothers, husbands, children and sisters, even though these family relations are difficult to give up. SB 10.65.11

The great devotees of Kṛṣṇa bore this heavy burden. Kṛṣṇa would be extremely embarrassed in Vraja if he were not cleared of false allegations of enjoying with the wives of other men when he returned to Vraja. This quality is shown in Hari-vaṁśa:

yatra hrīḥ śrīḥ sthitā tatra yatra śrīs tatra saṁnatiḥ
saṁnatir hrīs tathā śrīś ca nityaṁ kṛṣṇe mahātmani

Lakṣmī resides where shyness resides. Where Lakṣmī resides, gentle conduct resides. These three are eternally within Kṛṣṇa. Hari-vaṁśa

2.101.73

Therefore in order to avoid embarrassment and protect himself, he shows himself married to them using his māyā. In Vraja, which acts according to human affairs, this is done according to local custom, not as in the assembly of Parīkṣit where he is described by Śukadeva as Paramātmā.

gopīnāṁ tat-patīnāṁ ca sarveṣām eva dehinām
yo ’ntaś carati so ’dhyakṣaḥ krīḍaneneha deha-bhāk

He who lives as the overseeing witness within the gopīs and their husbands, and indeed within all embodied living beings, assumes forms in this world to enjoy transcendental pastimes. SB 10.33.35

Out of happiness to produce rasa and refute the idea of them being other’s wives, in this verse he says that he is their husband (ramaṇam).

Durvāsā says the the gopīs in Gopāla-tāpaṇi Upaniṣad:

jamna-jarābhyaṁ bhinnau sthāṇur ayam acchedyo yam ’sau saurye tiṣṭati
yo ’sau goṣu tiṣthati, yo ’sau gopān pālayati yo ’ṣau sarveṣu vedeṣu tiṣthati,
yo ’sau sarvair vedair gīyate yo ’sau sarveṣu bhūteṣv āviṣya bhūtāni
vidadhāti sa vo hi svāmī bhavati

He is without birth and death, is permanent and cannot be cut. He is situated near the Yamunā, in the cows, in all the Vedas, and protects the cowherds. He is glorified in all the Vedas and entering into all beings, supports all beings. He is your husband.

In the Padma Purāṇa there is another prose passage:

kṛṣṇas tu nanda-gopa-vrajaukasāṁ sarveṣāṁ nirāmayaṁ sva-padaṁ
dattvā divi deva-gaṇaiḥ saṁstūyamāno dvāravatīṁ viveśa

Kṛṣṇa, however, after bestowing on Nanda Gopa and all the other inhabitants of Vraja his own abode, which is free of all faults (including separation), traveled through the sky and returned to Dvārakā as devatās chanted his praises.

Nirāmayam means “free of material faults and free of again having the pain of separation.” Sva-padam means “the shelter of eternal pastimes in his form of Gopāla.”

His role as a paramour (jāram) is resolved by Śukadeva. In order to praise spiritual discrimination brought about by her guru Dattreya, Piṅgalā thought of temporarily enjoying with Kṛṣṇa, the husband (ramaṇam).

santaṁ samīpe ramaṇaṁ rati-pradaṁ
vitta-pradaṁ nityam imaṁ vihāya
akāma-daṁ duḥkha-bhayādhi-śoka-
moha-pradaṁ tuccham ahaṁ bhaje ’jñā

Giving up the eternal Lord situated within me, the Lord who accepts love and gives love and wealth, foolishly I serve insignificant men who give dissatisfaction, sorrow, fear, worry, lamentation and illusion. SB 11.8.31

Since the temporary nature of the paramour condition had been thus shown and will be shown later, it is not the final goal. Therefore, the verse says that they attained him as ramaṇa (husband) which was the human form of Brahman, which had appeared to be the form of a paramour previously. Having stated the previous perception, his position as husband is described. Having stated what was concluded, he then states the ideal situation, just as one says, “That brāhmaṇa is a learned man.” The state of being a paramour has been completed. It cannot be reversed. Or, it is said that on attaining scriptures one becomes knowledgeable of the truth. It is said, “He completes the sacrifice using yogurt.” Ramaṇa can be used as the word yogurt. (They attained him as a husband.) Kṛṣṇa as Brahman does not attain a previous state as a paramour. This Brahman is the Brahman mentioned in śruti. The impersonalists say Bhagavān is the product of illusion and its final form (paramam) is not revealed as Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa. The word mām they say also refers to Brahman. For them, Bhagavān is a dependent entity.

If the word ramaṇam were not mentioned then the word would be seen as jāram or paramour. If the word jāram were not mentioned then the word ramaṇam would be taken to mean jāram. But to refute this idea the Lord says “accordingly as they surrender I respond to them.” (BG 4.11) The Lord responds according to the worshipper’s bhāva. That bhāva is revealed by Rādhā.

api bata madhu-puryām ārya-putro’dhunāste
smarati sa pitṛ-gehān saumya bandhūṁś ca gopān

kvacid api sa kathāṁ naḥ kiṅkarīṇāṁ gṛṇīte
bhujam aguru-sugandhaṁ mūrdhny adhāsyat kadā nu

O Uddhava! It is indeed regrettable that Kṛṣṇa resides in Mathurā. Does he remember his father's household affairs and his friends, the cowherd boys? O great soul! Does he ever talk about us, his maidservants? When will he lay on our heads his aguru-scented hand? SB 10.47.21

The word ārya-putra (respected son) is used in the above verse to mean a husband. This is the usage by poets to indicate the internal feeling that he belongs to her. Kiṅkarīnām indicates her humble position with some indecision. But the questions "When will he lay on our heads his aguru-scented hand?" It is clear she considers him a husband and prays that he accept her. He also says that he desires this:

dhārayanty ati-kṛcchreṇa prāyaḥ prāṇān kathañcana
pratyāgamana-sandeśair ballavyo me mad-ātmikāḥ

Simply because I have promised to return to them, my fully devoted cowherd girlfriends struggle to maintain their lives somehow or other. SB 10.46.6

At that time, they had not attained him as their husband. Instead of using the words pati and upapati he uses the words jāram and ramaṇam. By taking the etymological meaning, clearly its excellence is indicated. Attaining him as a husband is suggested to be the proper fulfillment. Śrīdhara Svāmī in his commentary on SB 11.12.13 says that the gopīs attained him, the supreme Brahman, as a husband, though he was known as a paramour. The reason for his mercy is that they were innocent women (abalāḥ), without jñāna or kriyā-śakti.

But though this is so, in assessing and judging the situation, it should not be said that only the ramaṇa or husband generates attraction, for without attraction, a woman would not even take shelter of a material paramour. That is the meaning of a paramour, what to speak of the paramour who is the supreme hero, indicating by the word paramam and mām. The sthāyi-bhāva is not directly mentioned but is shown by indirect means with these words. The indirect expression is a rule in the rasa scriptures.

Since the purpose is playful pastimes, these pastimes are attained because of the previous reason. "If the word ramaṇa was used, then the false

husbands of the gopīs would not suffer because of the gopīs' relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Why did the gopīs then hide their feelings?" The gopīs who were related to these so-called husbands experienced the most intense suffering by a relationship with anyone except Kṛṣṇa.

kurvanti hi tvayi ratiṁ kuśalāḥ sva ātman
nitya-priye pati-sutādibhir ārti-daiḥ kim
tan naḥ prasīda parameśvara mā sma chindyā
āśāṁ dhṛtāṁ tvayi cirād aravinda-netra

Expert transcendentalists always direct their affection toward you because they recognize you as their true self and eternal beloved. What use do we have for these husbands, children and relatives of ours, who simply give us trouble? Therefore, O supreme controllers grant us your mercy. O lotus-eyed one, please do not cut down our long-cherished hope to have your association. SB 10.29.33

Because of their relationships with their so-called husbands they say:

nānya samakṣam añjaḥ sthātuṁ tvayābhiramitā bata pārayāmaḥ

From that time on we will be unable even to stand in the presence of any other man, for we will have been fully satisfied by you. SB 10.29.36

What then to speak of the husbands who prevented the gopīs from leaving the house. (SB 10.29.9) Therefore the etymological meaning of ramaṇa cannot be applied in the verse. The word can only be used in the secondary sense of "husband." Otherwise ramaṇa would have the same meaning as jāra and the fault of redundant words would occur. Two meanings of jāra should not be used. The word jāram also cannot have another meaning. By accepting the etymological meaning of the word ramaṇam the secondary sense becomes nullified. By understanding the word to meaning husband, it negates the condition of being a paramour. These terms are given by the Lord himself in the verse to establish the truth. Though the meaning is completely different if one stubbornly sticks to wrong interpretation, then there would also arise the contemptible position of correlating a paramour with Brahman, the shelter of all the descriptive terms in the verse since it is impossible to consider one element of the apposition in the sentence to be a mere perception and the other to be the truth. Nor can there be a simultaneous appearance of the real and false. Prominence should be

given to the desire to express a certain meaning. It is also not true to argue that removing the paramour status and having an absence of opposition will not produce an increase in attraction.

yadyapy asau pārśva-gato raho-gatas
tathāpi tasyāṅghri-yugaṁ navaṁ navam

Although Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa was constantly by the queens' sides, as well as exclusively alone, his feet appeared to them to be newer and newer. SB 1.11.33

What then to speak of the situation the gopīs, who were the highest devotees in prema? It is also not a fact that the highest rati arises only where there is rare meeting of the couple, where the love is hidden and where there are orders to prevent the couple meeting. According to scriptures on rasa, the excellene of rati arise by the meeting. In the story of Yayāti and the dancer Ratnāvatī, love arises in their marriage. Scriptures on rasa take married love as the main rasa.

Because of not being married to him, because of embarrassment, and because he had many women lovers, it becomes most difficult to meet Kṛṣṇa at all times. The gopīs became most disturbed:

yā dustyajaṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-padavīṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām

The gopīs of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, which one should search for by Vedic knowledge. SB 10.47.61

The gopīs' giving up of dharma revealed the strength of their love. Being prevented from meeting him did not generate such love, just as an elephant's strength is not produced by crushing a huge obstacle but it reveals his strength. In this state of parakīya, this fact should be reiterated. Therefore, the verse says that he married them (ramaṇam). This is what I wanted to say.

They had this determination:

tam eva paramātmānaṁ jāra-buddhyāpi saṅgatāh
jahur guṇa-mayaṁ dehaṁ sadyaḥ prakṣīṇa-bandhanāh

Although these girls simply thought of the Supreme Lord as their male lover and associated with him in that intimate mood, their karmic bondage was nullified, and they abandoned their gross material bodies. SB 10.29.11

yā mayā krīḍatā rātryāṁ vane 'smin vraja āsthitāḥ
alabdha-rāsāḥ kalyāṇyo māpur mad-vīrya-cintayā

Some of those all-auspicious gopīs could not directly join me in enjoying the rāsa dance on that night in this Vṛndāvana forest, yet still they achieved my association by remembering my pastimes. SB 10.47.37

By use of the word api in jāra-buddhyāpi (SB 10.29.11), the dislike for this condition is made known. jighāṁsayāpi haraye stanaṁ dattvāpa sad-gatim: Pūtaṇā attained the highest destination by offering her breast to Kṛṣṇa, though (api) she came with a desire to kill Kṛṣṇa. The word api indicates that desiring to kill him was her nature and indicates criticism of her. Used with expressions of criticism, the api indicates criticism. Used with expressions of praise, it indicates praise, as in the phrase palāṇḍum api siñcait tulasīm api siṇcati: he waters even the onion (api used as criticism), and he waters even tulasī (api indicating praise). But thinking of him as their husband does not have such connotations.

yāḥ samparyacaran premṇā pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ
jagad-guruṁ bhartṛ-buddhyā tāsāṁ kim varṇyate tapaḥ

And how could one possibly describe the great austerities that had been performed by the women who perfectly served him, the spiritual master of the universe, in pure ecstatic love? Thinking of him as their husband, they rendered such intimate services as massaging his feet. SB 10.90.27

Thinking of him as a husband is praised. In the sentence "The gopīs of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up" (SB 10.47.61) there is no real praise for the condition of love for a paramour but rather praise for their raga or attraction to him which accepts him, even if he is a paramour. He makes this statement out of astonishment.

etāḥ paraṁ tanu-bhṛto bhuvi gopa-vadhvo
govinda eva nikhilātmani rūḍha-bhāvāḥ
vāñchanti yad bhava-bhiyo munayo vayaṁ ca
kiṁ brahma-janmabhir ananta-kathā-rasasya

Among all persons on earth, these cowherd women alone have actually perfected their embodied lives, for they have achieved the perfection of unalloyed love for Govinda. Their pure love is hankered after by those who fear material existence, by great sages, and by ourselves as well. For one who has tasted the narrations of the infinite Lord, what is the use of taking birth as a high-class brāhmaṇa, or even as Brahmā himself? SB 10.47.58

Their love is desired by those desiring liberation, those who are liberated and by the devotees. Thus the mood is not "Marrying other men, we enjoy with him as a paramour." Rather seeing such great, irrepressible prema, they prayed for the auspiciousness of the gopīs who desired Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

"He lit a funeral bed for generous, pleasant Bhīṣma." In this example, the descriptive elements are related to the verb. The person finally (with reluctance) lit the funeral pyre in spite of Bhīṣma's wonderful qualities. Therefore, in the verse under discussion the gopīs attained the supreme Brahman, but as their husband (ramaṇam). No longer knowing him as a paramour (jāram asvarūpa-vit), they attained him directly as eternal consorts.

aneka-janma-siddhānāṁ gopīnāṁ patir eva vā
nanda-nandana ity uktas trailokyānanda-vardhanaḥ

Kṛṣṇa is the husband of many cowherd women who remained perfected through many births. He who is the son of Nanda, Nanda-nandana, increases the bliss of the three worlds. Gautamīya-tantra

Aneka-janma-siddhānāṁ means that the gopīs, like Kṛṣṇa, appear countless times as perfect devotees to perform pastimes with him in the material world. Thus, the Gītā says bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni tava cārjuna: O Arjuna, you and I have passed many births in this world. (BG 4.5) This statement refutes the idea that the gopīs consort with a paramour in the prakaṭa pastimes. The word vā indicates that the two previous explanations of the Kṛṣṇa mantra in terms of Brahman and īśvara are not to be given much regard. One should not say that he cannot be their husband

in Vraja simply because they were well known to have a parakīya relationship with him. Just as the līlā-śakti arranged to have them married to someone else, can the same śakti not make them unmarried to those men? When the gopīs finally united with Kṛṣṇa the apparent husbands also showed no hatred towards him.

nāsūyan khalu kṛṣṇāya mohitās tasya māyayā
manyamānāḥ sva-pārśva-sthān svān svān dārān vrajaukasaḥ

The cowherd men, bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's illusory potency, thought their wives had remained home at their sides. Thus they did not harbor any jealous feelings against him. SB 10.33.37

Māyā produced some false forms of gopīs for the husbands. When the situation was resolved, with the dissolution of false forms of the gopīs made by māyā, he met with the Yadus in another manifestation (since he also stayed with the people of Vraja). It was said he then entered Dvārakā with the Vṛṣṇis since they all stood outside the city waiting for him when he returned from Vraja. Though he returned after a delay of two months, they did not show alarm that he was so far away, because yoga-māyā made the time seem like a muhūrta. The verse also says he came alone. They considered it a moment. Later they understood everything from Dāruka. In this way everything was arranged.

After the people of Gokula entered into aprakaṭa pastimes, Balarāma went on a pilgrimage following the Yamunā (as described in the rest of this chapter, verse 20) and, after the Kurukṣetra war, Kṛṣṇa returned from Hastināpura to Dvārakā, as described in the First Canto. The commentaries on the five chapters dealing with rāsa-līlā and the teaching of Uddhava should be studied along with the present commentary.

Text 78.16

evaṁ yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo bhagavān jagad-īśvaraḥ
īyate paśu-dṛṣṭīnāṁ nirjito jayatīti saḥ

Thus Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, the master all mystic power and Lord of the universe, is ever victorious. Only those of beastly vision think he sometimes suffers defeat.

COMMENTARY: Having described Kṛṣṇa's victories, Śukadeva now criticizes those who think that he was sometimes defeated. Only the foolish, not others, think that he is defeated in his victories (iti). That may be possible for others but not for the Lord. His defeat is imaginary since the Lord is the controller of the acintya-śakti (yogeśvaraḥ), and is thus is also endowed with all powers (bhagavān), and is consequently the Lord of the universe.

Text 78.17

śrutvā yuddhodyamaṁ rāmaḥ kurūṇāṁ saha pāṇḍavaiḥ
tīrthābhiṣeka-vyājena madhya-sthaḥ prayayau kila

Balarāma then heard that the Kurus were preparing for war with the Pāṇḍavas. Being neutral, he departed on the pretext of going to bathe in holy places.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma did not side with either party. He did this for variety in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. He left Dvārakā.

Text 78.18

snātvā prabhāse santarpya devarṣi-pitṛ-mānavān
sarasvatīṁ prati-srotaṁ yayau brāhmaṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ

After bathing at Prabhāsa and honoring the devatās, sages, Pitṛs and prominent human beings, he went in the company of brāhmaṇas to the portion of the Sarasvatī that flows westward into the sea.

COMMENTARY: According to the rules, with devotion (sam) he offered tarpaṇas to devatās, sages, Pitṛs and mankind. The order is from best to the inferiors (devatās to humans). He was completely surrounded by priests and other brāhmaṇas (sam-vṛtaḥ).

Text 78.19–20

pṛthūdakaṁ bindu-saras tritakūpaṁ sudarśanam
viśālaṁ brahma-tīrthaṁ ca cakraṁ prācīṁ sarasvatīm
yamunām anu yāny eva gaṅgām anu ca bhārata
jagāma naimiṣaṁ yatra ṛṣayaḥ satram āsate

Balarāma visited Pṛthūdaka, Bindu-saras, Tritakūpa, Sudarśana, Viśāla, Brahma-tīrtha, Cakra-tīrtha and the eastward-flowing Sarasvatī. He also

went to all the holy places along the Yamunā and the Ganges, O Bhārata, and then he came to the Naimiṣa forest, where great sages were performing an elaborate sacrifice.

COMMENTARY: Pṛthūdaka is near Kurukṣetra, where Pṛthu performed a hundred horse sacrifices. Bindu-saras is the hermitage of Kardama, east of Siddhapura in Gujarat. Tṛta was the brother of Eka and Dvita. Cheated by his brothers while they were herding cows, he went first, and, in fear of a wolf, he fell in a well and was lifted out by Soma after worshipping devatās. Tritakūpa is on the bank of the Sarasvatī River. Viśālā refers to Āvantī or holy place on the Sarasvatī River. Another version has Viśālam, also described as a special place on the Sarasvatī River. Brahma-tīrtha is between Kanyā-tīrtha and Soma-tīrtha. It is also called Kalpa-tīrtha in Mahābhārata, Āranyaka-parva after describing Kanyā-tīrtha:

tato gacchen naravyāghra brahmaṇaḥ sthānam uttamam
tatra varṇāvaraḥ snātvā brāhmaṇyaṁ labhate naraḥ

The tiger among men should go to the best place of Brahmā. The person of lowest varṇa, bathing there, becomes a brāhmaṇa.

Soma-tīrtha is also described in that text. He went to Cakra-tīrtha and the east flowing Sarasvatī. The verb yayau is understood from the previous verse. Sometimes he went to the places in order of the path he took. Sometimes, because of the greatness of the place, those places are mentioned out of order. The verses do not list the places in the order that he went, but simply indicate those places to which he went. Śukadeva calls out of Parīkṣit in amazement at Balarāma's going to all the holy places so quickly or he addresses him in order alert him to another goal at Naimikṣetra.

Text 78.21

tam āgatam abhipretya munayo dīrgha-satriṇaḥ
abhinandya yathā-nyāyaṁ praṇamyotthāya cārcayan

Recognizing the Lord upon his arrival, the sages, who had been engaged in their sacrificial rituals for a long time, greeted him properly by standing up, bowing down and worshiping him.

COMMENTARY: First they rose from their seats, then they offered respects, then they welcomed him (abhinandya). Then they worshipped him according to the rules.

Text 78.22

so 'rcitaḥ sa-parīvāraḥ kṛtāsana-parigrahaḥ
romaharṣaṇam āsīnaṁ maharṣeḥ śiṣyam aikṣata

After being thus worshiped along with his entourage, the Lord accepted a seat of honor. Then he noticed that Romaharṣaṇa, Vyāsadeva's disciple, had remained seated.

COMMENTARY: As a disciple of Vyāsa, Romaharṣaṇa should have had good conduct. But he remained seated. Therefore, he was a great offender.

Text 78.23

apratyutthāyinaṁ sūtam akṛta-prahvaṇāñjalim
adhyāsīnaṁ ca tān viprāṁś cukopodvīkṣya mādhavaḥ

Balarāma became extremely angry at Romaharṣaṇa and the brāhmaṇas upon seeing how this member of the sūta caste had failed to stand up, bow down or join his palms, and remained seated.

COMMENTARY: First Romaharṣaṇa did not rise. Then he did not offer respects or fold his hands. Then he remained seated. Moreover, he was of sūta class. With each of these items, Balarāma became more and more astonished. Balarāma saw him by looking upwards (ud-vīkṣya) since Romaharṣānā was sitting high above.

Text 78.24

yasmād asāv imān viprān adhyāste pratiloma-jaḥ
dharma-pālāṁs tathaivāsmān vadham arhati durmatiḥ

[Lord Balarāma said:] Because this fool born from an improperly mixed marriage sits above all these brāhmaṇas and even above me, the protector of dharma, he deserves to die.

COMMENTARY: Romaharṣaṇa was seated higher than the brāhmaṇas performing sacrifice (imān) and even Balarāma, the protector of dharma,

since he was foolish (durmatiḥ). He remained seated whereas all others rose. Thus, he was most unintelligent.

Text 78.25–26

ṛṣer bhagavato bhūtvā śiṣyo 'dhītya bahūni ca
setihāsa-purāṇāni dharma-śāstrāṇi sarvaśaḥ
adāntasyāvinītasya vṛthā paṇḍita-māninaḥ
na guṇāya bhavanti sma naṭasyevājitātmanaḥ

Although he is a disciple of the divine sage Vyāsa and has thoroughly learned many scriptures from him, including the lawbooks of dharma and the epic histories and Purāṇas, all this study has not produced good qualities in him. Rather, his study of the scriptures is like an actor's studying his part. Because he has not controlled his mind or senses, his scholarly authority is useless.

COMMENTARY: Vyāsa was an avatāra of the Lord and had written many scriptures on dharma. The studying did not produce qualities like control of the mind. Because of an ancient offense, he could not control his mind. Thus he could not control his senses. Therefore, his learning was useless.

Text 78.27

etad-artho hi loke 'sminn avatāro mayā kṛtaḥ
vadhyā me dharma-dhvajinas te hi pātakino 'dhikāḥ

The very purpose of my descent into this world is to kill such hypocrites who pretend to be religious. Indeed, they are the most sinful rascals.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma speaks in the singular because he is non-different from Kṛṣṇa. Or, thinking that Kṛṣṇa was too soft, he spoke only for himself. "I cannot tolerate this." Dharma-dhvajinaḥ refers to pretenders who carry signs of being great though they are unqualified.

Text 78.28

etāvad uktvā bhagavān nivṛtto 'sad-vadhād api
bhāvitvāt taṁ kuśāgreṇa kara-sthenāhanat prabhuḥ

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Although Balarāma had stopped killing the impious while on pilgrimage, Romaharṣaṇa's death was inevitable.

Thus, having spoken, the Lord killed him by picking up a blade of kuśa grass and touching him with its tip.

COMMENTARY: He acted quickly because the sages might forbid killing Romaharṣaṇa. Even though Balarāma had given up killing while he was on pilgrimage, he killed him since his death was inevitable. He killed him with a piece of kuśa that he held in his hand while he acted as a brahmacārī during his pilgrimage. "How could touching him with a tip of kuśa kill him?" Balarāma was capable of everything (prabhuḥ).

Text 78.29

hāheti-vādinaḥ sarve munayaḥ khinna-mānasāḥ
ūcuḥ saṅkarṣaṇaṁ devam adharmas te kṛtaḥ prabho

All the sages cried out, "Alas, alas!" in great distress. They told Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, "O master, you have committed an irreligious act!

COMMENTARY: In distress the sages cried out, not in anger but with politeness. O Lord of all beings (prabho)! You have committed adharma. But this is because you are the second member of Svayam Bhagavān's caturvyūha, Saṅkarṣaṇa and worshipped by all (devam). The real meaning of their words is "You have done something beyond which there is no dharma (adharma). It is the highest dharma."

Text 78.30

asya brahmāsanaṁ dattam asmābhir yadu-nandana
āyuś cātmāklamaṁ tāvad yāvat satraṁ samāpyate

"O favorite of the Yadus, we gave him the seat of the spiritual master and promised him long life and freedom from physical pain for as long as this sacrifice continues.

COMMENTARY: You have appeared in the Yadu family to protect true dharma (yadu-nandana). Therefore, you must protect what we granted to him.

Text 78.31–32

ajānataivācaritas tvayā brahma-vadho yathā
yogeśvarasya bhavato nāmnāyo 'pi niyāmakaḥ

yady etad-brahma-hatyāyāḥ pāvanaṁ loka-pāvana
cariṣyati bhavāl̐ loka- saṅgraho ’nanya-coditaḥ

“You have unknowingly killed a brāhmaṇa. Of course, even the injunctions of revealed scripture cannot dictate to you, the Lord of all mystic power. But if by your own free will you nonetheless carry out the prescribed purification for this slaying of a brāhmaṇa, O purifier of the whole world, people in general will greatly benefit by your example.”

COMMENTARY: Though it was done without considering all aspects (ajanatā), it is like killing a brāhmaṇa. But it is not killing a brāhmaṇa. But you are not under the control of scriptures since you are the Lord of yoga.

But if your feel inspired, not by others, but by yourself as the Lord, or if you are completely inspired, then you should purify yourself to teach the world, for by maintaining dharma you purify the world (loka-pāvana).

Text 78.33

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
cariṣye vadha-nirveśaṁ lokānugraha-kāmyayā
niyamaḥ prathame kalpe yāvān sa tu vidhīyatām

The Lord said: I will certainly perform the atonement for this killing, since I wish to show compassion to the people in general. Please, therefore, prescribe for me whatever ritual is to be done first.

COMMENTARY: You should prescribe the vow that must be done first. There is no alternative.

Text 78.34

dīrgham āyur bataitasya sattvam indriyam eva ca
āśāsitaṁ yat tad brute sādhaye yoga-māyayā

O sages, just say the word, and by my mystic power I shall restore everything you promised him—long life, strength and sensory power.

COMMENTARY: By my acintya-śakti I can do everything you asked.

Text 78.35

ṛṣaya ūcuḥ
astrasya tava vīryasya mṛtyor asmākam eva ca
yathā bhaved vacaḥ satyaṁ tathā rāma vidhīyatām

The sages said: Please see to it, O Rāma, that your power and that of your kuśa weapon, as well as our promise and Romaharṣaṇa's death, all remain intact.

COMMENTARY: Arrange things so that your weapon and your prowess remain intact, since they belong to you. His death should remain, since it was arranged by you, the Lord. And the truth of our words, concerning the performance of a sacrifice, should remain intact, since it is related to you. By this you will perfect your position as the giver of pleasure to all beings (rāma).

Text 78.36

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
ātmā vai putra utpanna iti vedānuśāsanam
tasmād asya bhaved vaktā āyur-indriya-sattva-vān

The Supreme Lord said: The Vedas instruct us that one's own self takes birth again as one's son. Thus let Romaharṣaṇa's son become the speaker of the Purāṇas, and let him be endowed with long life, strong senses and stamina.

COMMENTARY: Vai means "it is well known."

Text 78.37

kiṁ vaḥ kāmo muni-śreṣṭhā brūtāhaṁ karavāṇy atha
ajānatas tv apacitiṁ yathā me cintyatāṁ budhāḥ

Please tell me your desire, O best of sages, and I shall certainly fulfill it. And, O wise souls, please carefully determine my proper atonement, since I do not know what it might be.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma pretends he is ignorant, since he plays the part of a human in these pastimes. Actually, he had no fault in killing Romaharṣaṇa.

Text 78.38

ṛṣaya ūcuḥ
ilvalasya suto ghoro balvalo nāma dānavaḥ
sa dūṣayati naḥ satram etya parvaṇi parvaṇi

The sages said: A fearsome demon named Balvala, the son of Ilvala, comes here every new-moon day and contaminates our sacrifice.

COMMENTARY: The demon comes on days like the dark moon and full moon. They repeat the word parvaṇi to indicate that he comes on every parva without fail.

Text 78.39

taṁ pāpaṁ jahi dāśārha tan naḥ śuśrūṣaṇaṁ param
pūya-śoṇita-vin-mūtra-surā-māṁsābhivarṣiṇam

O descendant of Daśārha, please kill that sinful demon, who pours down pus, blood, feces, urine, wine and meat upon us. This is the best service you can do for us.

COMMENTARY: You have appeared in the family of Daśārha in order to protect persons like us!

Text 78.40

tataś ca bhārataṁ varṣaṁ parītya su-samāhitaḥ
caritvā dvādaśa-māsāṁs tīrtha-snāyī viśudhyasi

Thereafter, for twelve months, you should circumambulate the land of Bhārata in a mood of serious meditation, executing austerities and bathing at various holy pilgrimage sites. In this way you will become purified.

COMMENTARY: The sages by their cleverness did not instruct him to do atonement caused by specific holy places. They told him to do a pilgrimage to the places in the middle of Bhārata-varṣa. One version has dvādaśān māsān. Dvādaśa is easy to understand and accepted by Citsukha and Śrīdhara Svāmī. By doing this your fame will become spotless. By taking the verb in a causative sense however, the meaning is “You will purify the holy places by your spotless fame.”

[1] *parokṣa-vādo vedo 'yaṁ bālānām anuśāsanam*
karma-mokṣāya karmāṇi vidhatte hy agadaṁ yathā

The Vedas, speaking indirectly, prescribe karma-yoga, in order to liberate people from karma, just as a father promises candy in order to get children to drink medicine. SB 11.3.44

Chapter Seventy-nine
Lord Balarāma Goes on Pilgrimage

Text 79.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
tataḥ parvaṇy upāvṛtte pracaṇḍaḥ pāṁśu-varṣaṇaḥ
bhīmo vāyur abhūd rājan pūya-gandhas tu sarvaśaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Then, on the new-moon day, O King, a fierce and frightening wind arose, scattering dust all about and spreading the smell of pus everywhere.

COMMENTARY: At that moment, a sharp (pracaṇḍaḥ), frightful (bhīmaḥ) wind smelling of pus arose. Śukadeva calls to Parīkṣit in amazement.

Text 79.2

tato 'medhya-mayaṁ varṣaṁ balvalena vinirmitam
abhavad yajña-śālāyāṁ so 'nvadṛśyata śūla-dhṛk

Next, onto the sacrificial arena came a downpour of abominable things sent by Balvala, after which the demon himself appeared, trident in hand.

COMMENTARY: After the wind came a shower of impure things made by Balvala. Then, after that (anu), he was seen by the people there, or became visible.

Text 79.3–4

taṁ vilokya bṛhat-kāyaṁ bhinnāñjana-cayopamam
tapta-tāmra-śikhā-śmaśruṁ daṁṣṭrogra-bhru-kuṭī-mukham
sasmāra mūṣalaṁ rāmaḥ para-sainya-vidāraṇam
halaṁ ca daitya-damanaṁ te tūrṇam upatasthatuḥ

The immense demon resembled a mass of black carbon. His topknot and beard were like molten copper, and his face had horrible fangs and furrowed eyebrows. Upon seeing him, Balarāma thought of his club, which tears to pieces his enemies' armies, and his plow, which punishes

the demons. Thus summoned, his two weapons appeared before him at once.

COMMENTARY: The various adjectives describe him with increasingly ferocious nature, from having a big body to having fangs and frowning eyebrows. Balarāma would give joy (rāmaḥ) to the sages by killing him. He thought of his club and plow since they could kill the enemy very easily.

Text 79.5

tam ākṛṣya halāgreṇa balvalaṁ gagane-caram
mūṣalenāhanat kruddho mūrdhni brahma-druhaṁ balaḥ

With the tip of his plow Balarāma caught hold of the demon Balvala as he flew through the sky, and with his club the Lord angrily struck that harasser of brāhmaṇas on the head.

COMMENTARY: He caught the demon with his plow since the demon committed violence against brāhmaṇa families. Balarāma (balaḥ) was absorbed in killing him with extra strength.

Text 79.6

so 'patad bhuvi nirbhinna-lalāṭo 'sṛk samutsṛjan
muñcann ārta-svaraṁ śailo yathā vajra-hato 'ruṇaḥ

Balvala cried out in agony and fell to the ground, his forehead cracked open and gushing blood. He resembled a red mountain struck by a lightning bolt.

COMMENTARY: Blood flowed from his forehead in streams (sam-utsṛjan). The example of lightning is given to indicate that, with just one blow, the demon with a huge body fell over. When a mountain is struck by lightning, red minerals gush from the mountain like blood. The demon fell over with a loud noise.

Text 79.7

saṁstutya munayo rāmaṁ prayujyāvitathāśiṣaḥ
abhyaṣiñcan mahā-bhāgā vṛtra-ghnaṁ vibudhā yathā

The exalted sages honored Balarāma with sincere prayers and awarded him infallible blessings. Then they performed his ritual bath, just as the

devatās had formally bathed Indra when he killed Vṛtra.

COMMENTARY: The brāhmaṇas praised Balarāma profusely (sam-stutya) because Balarāma was most dear to Kṛṣṇa and was the Lord. And the brāhmaṇas were highly knowledgeable (munayaḥ). They gave blessings that would give immediate results (avitathā). "Protect the universe at your will and may all your desires be fulfilled." They performed an auspicious bath for him since they were most fortunate, having all wealth (mahā-bhāgāḥ). A suitable example is given.

Text 79.8

vaijayantīṁ dadur mālāṁ śrī-dhāmāmlāna-paṅkajāṁ
rāmāya vāsasī divye divyāny ābharaṇāni ca

They gave Balarāma a most attractive Vaijayantī garland of unfading lotuses and they also gave him a set of divine garments and jewelry.

COMMENTARY: The garland was mostly lotuses but had five colors since it was Vaijayantī. It was most attractive (śrīdhama).

Text 79.9

atha tair abhyanujñātaḥ kauśikīm etya brāhmaṇaiḥ
snātvā sarovaram agād yataḥ sarayūr āsravat

Then, given leave by the sages, the Lord went with a contingent of brāhmaṇas to the Kauśikī River, where he bathed. From there he went to the lake from which flows the river Sarayū.

COMMENTARY: After that (atha), he took permission from the sages since he wanted to begin his pilgrimage. He went with priests to the Sarayū river.

Text 79.10

anu-srotena sarayūṁ prayāgam upagamya saḥ
snātvā santarpya devādīn jagāma pulahāśramam

The Lord followed the course of the Sarayū until he came to Prayāga, where he bathed and then performed rituals to propitiate the devatās and other living beings. Next he went to the āśrama of Pulaha Ṛṣi.

COMMENTARY: He went down the Sarayū to Prāyaga. After bathing and offering tarpaṇas he went to Pulaha's hermitage.

Text 79.11–15

gomatīṁ gaṇḍakīṁ snātvā vipāśāṁ śoṇa āplutaḥ
gayāṁ gatvā pitṝn iṣṭvā gaṅgā-sāgara-saṅgame
upaspṛśya mahendrādrau rāmaṁ dṛṣṭvābhivādya ca
sapta-godāvarīṁ veṇāṁ pampāṁ bhīmarathīṁ tataḥ
skandaṁ dṛṣṭvā yayau rāmaḥ śrī-śailaṁ giriśālayam
draviḍeṣu mahā-puṇyaṁ dṛṣṭvādriṁ veṅkaṭaṁ prabhuḥ
kāma-koṣṇīṁ purīṁ kāñcīṁ kāverīṁ ca sarid-varām
śrī-raṅgākhyaṁ mahā-puṇyaṁ yatra sannihito hariḥ
ṛṣabhādriṁ hareḥ kṣetraṁ dakṣiṇāṁ mathurāṁ tathā
sāmudraṁ setum agamat mahā-pātaka-nāśanam

Balarāma bathed in the Gomatī, Gaṇḍakī and Vipāśā rivers, and also immersed himself in the Śoṇa. He went to Gayā, where he worshiped his forefathers, and to the mouth of the Ganges, where he performed purifying ablutions. At Mount Mahendra he saw Paraśurāma and offered him prayers, and he bathed in the seven branches of the Godāvarī River, and also in the rivers Veṇā, Pampā and Bhīmarathī. Then Balarāma met Skanda and visited Śrī-śaila, the abode of Lord Giriśa. In the southern provinces known as Draviḍa-deśa the Supreme Lord saw the sacred Veṅkaṭa Hill, as well as the cities of Kāmakoṣṇī and Kāñcī, the exalted Kāverī River and the most holy Śrī-raṅga, where Kṛṣṇa has manifested himself. From there he went to Ṛṣabha Mountain, where Kṛṣṇa also lives, and to the southern Mathurā. Then he came to Setubandha, where the most grievous sins are destroyed.

COMMENTARY: Since his father and grandfather were still living, he offered sacrifice to his ancestors at Gāyā on the order of Vasudeva. He bathed (upaspṛśya) at Gaṅgā-sāgara. Though it was easy to go from there to Purī, he did not go since it was not necessary to worship Jagannatha since Jagannatha was non-different from Kṛṣṇa who had now appeared in complete form with all the avatāras. Or there was no particular goal in going there, since he was directly present and the deity there was non-different from him. He would also be embarrassed to worship himself. He

then saw Paraśurāma. He had bhakti for Paraśurāma. After that he went to Sapta-godavārī and other places and bathed there. Another version has sapta-godavaram. Veṇā and Bhīmarathī are rivers and Pampā is a lake.

He saw the mountain of Veṅkaṭa most pure (mahā-puṇyam) because it was the abode of Trimalla-nātha (Bālaji) and an important place of the Śrī-vaiṣṇavas. He went to Kāma-koṣṭi and other places (verb should be supplied), since he was capable of doing all things (prabhuḥ). In all those places he performed the pilgrimage duties completely. He went to Śrī-raṅgam where the Lord who destroys all suffering and attracts all (hariḥ) resides eternally (sannihitaḥ). Therefore, the place was most pure (mahā-puṇyam). The word ca means "then." He went to Samudra-setu which destroys great sins just by going there. One can atone for killing a brāhmaṇa there.

Text 79.16–17

tatrāyutam adād dhenūr brāhmaṇebhyo halāyudhaḥ
kṛtamālāṁ tāmraparṇīṁ malayaṁ ca kulācalam
tatrāgastyaṁ samāsīnaṁ namaskṛtyābhivādya ca
yojitas tena cāśīrbhir anujñāto gato 'rṇavam
dakṣiṇaṁ tatra kanyākhyāṁ durgāṁ devīṁ dadarśa saḥ

There at Setubandha [Rāmeśvaram] Balarāma gave brāhmaṇas ten thousand cows in charity. He then visited the Kṛtamālā and Tāmraparṇī rivers and the great Malaya Mountains. In the Malaya range Balarāma found Agastya Ṛṣi sitting in meditation. After bowing down to the sage, the Lord offered him prayers and then received blessings from him. Taking leave from Agastya, he proceeded to the shore of the Southern Ocean, where he saw Goddess Durgā in her form of Kanyā-kumārī.

COMMENTARY: He gave cows to the brāhmaṇas at Sāgara-setu. He is called the holder of the plow because after killing Balavala, he continued to carry the plow in order to protect the brāhmaṇa families wherever he went. He was also Saṅkarṣaṇa, able to do anything because of being directly the Supreme Lord. He went to the southernmost point of Bhārata-varṣa, with the Malaya mountain range (kulācalam) and met Agastya, who dwelled there constantly. Receiving his blessings and permission to leave, he went

to the Southern Ocean, and saw Durgā who was worshipped by the universe or shone with her glory (devīm).

Text 79.18

tataḥ phālgunam āsādya pañcāpsarasam uttamam
viṣṇuḥ sannihito yatra snātvāsparśad gavāyutam

Next he went to Phālguna-tīrtha and bathed in the sacred Pañcāpsarā Lake, where Viṣṇu had directly manifested himself. At this place he gave away another ten thousand cows.

COMMENTARY: He went to Pañcāpsarasa, seeing it is as most exalted (uttamam), where the Lord who spreads throughout the universe (viṣṇuḥ) was present. Bathing there, he gave (asparśat) ten thousand cows.

Text 79.19–21

tato 'bhivrajya bhagavān keralāṁs tu trigartakān
gokarṇākhyaṁ śiva-kṣetraṁ sānnidhyaṁ yatra dhūrjaṭeḥ
āryāṁ dvaipāyanīṁ dṛṣṭvā śūrpārakam agād balaḥ
tāpīṁ payoṣṇīṁ nirvindhyām upaspṛśyātha daṇḍakam
praviśya revām agamad yatra māhiṣmatī purī
manu-tīrtham upaspṛśya prabhāsaṁ punar āgamat

The Supreme Lord then traveled through the kingdoms of Kerala and Trigarta, visiting Śiva's sacred city of Gokarṇa, where Śiva directly manifests himself. After also visiting Goddess Pārvatī, who dwells on an island, Balarāma went to the holy district of Śūrpāraka and bathed in the Tāpī, Payoṣṇī and Nirvindhyā rivers. He next entered the Daṇḍaka forest and went to the river Revā, along which the city of Māhiṣmatī is found. Then he bathed at Manu-tīrtha and finally returned to Prabhāsa.

COMMENTARY: Going through Kerala, Trigarta he came to Gokarṇa since he was full of all powers (bhagavān). At all these places he performed bathing and other rites. He went to these places quickly (balaḥ) without fatigue. He quickly came to Daṇḍaka.

Text 79.22

śrutvā dvijaiḥ kathyamānaṁ kuru-pāṇḍava-saṁyuge
sarva-rājanya-nidhanaṁ bhāraṁ mene hṛtaṁ bhuvaḥ

The Lord heard from some brāhmaṇas how all the kings involved in the battle between the Kurus and Pāṇḍavas had been killed. From this he concluded that the earth was now relieved of her burden.

COMMENTARY: At Prabhāsa he heard that all the kings had been destroyed from the local brāhmaṇas or from brāhmaṇas who had come on pilgrimage there. He considered that the earth had now been relieved of her burden by Kṛṣṇa.

Text 79.23

sa bhīma-duryodhanayor gadābhyāṁ yudhyator mṛdhe
vārayiṣyan vinaśanaṁ jagāma yadu-nandanaḥ

Wanting to stop the club fight then raging between Bhīma and Duryodhana on the battlefield, Balarāma went to Kurukṣetra.

COMMENTARY: While Bhīma and Duryodhana were fighting with clubs in the arena (mṛdhe), he wanted to stop them or he wanted to stop the two from fighting (mṛdhe), because the two were equally related to the Yadus. Or he wanted to stop the fighting (yudhayoḥ) in the arena.

Text 79.24

yudhiṣṭhiras tu taṁ dṛṣṭvā yamau kṛṣṇārjunāv api
abhivādyābhavaṁs tuṣṇīṁ kiṁ vivakṣur ihāgataḥ

When Yudhiṣṭhira, Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and the twin brothers Nakula and Sahadeva saw Balarāma, they offered him respectful obeisances but said nothing, thinking "What has he come here to tell us?"

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna welcomed Balarāma last, as mentioned in the verse, since they were ashamed because of being the two main ksatriyas left when all the other kṣartriyas and friends were killed in the war. They wondered, "What has Balarāma come and what does he want to say? Does he want to point out faults or good points?" They were silent, unable to say anything.

Text 79.25

gadā-pāṇī ubhau dṛṣṭvā saṁrabdhau vijayaiṣiṇau
maṇḍalāni vicitrāṇi carantāv idam abravīt

Balarāma saw Duryodhana and Bhīma with clubs in their hands, each angrily striving for victory over the other as they circled about skillfully. The Lord addressed them as follows.

COMMENTARY: He saw them, both angry, (saṁrabdhau), each desiring victory, moving about in various ways with their clubs. Because of this, he spoke, as they offered respects. Or in spite of this he spoke.

Text 79.26

yuvāṁ tulya-balau vīrau he rājan he vṛkodara
ekaṁ prāṇādhikaṁ manye utaikaṁ śikṣayādhikam

[Lord Balarāma said:] King Duryodhana! And Bhīma! Listen! You two warriors are equal in fighting prowess. I know that one of you has greater physical power, while the other is better trained in technique.

COMMENTARY: Both of you are equal in ability to fight and have great determination (vīrau). O King! He addresses Duryodhana with great respect out of affection for him as a disciple. Therefore he addresses him first. Or, in giving up fighting you save your life and can enjoy the kingdom. Or, he describes Duryodhana's evil nature of desiring to be king (rājān), in order to make him accept his words. I think Bhīma has greater strength than you but (uta) you have greater knowledge in using the club since I personally taught you. Or Bhīma is more than my life. I have the most affection for him, though I have given greater instruction to Duryodhana. Seeing the two now, I realize this more than before.

Text 79.27

tasmād ekatarasyeha yuvayoḥ sama-vīryayoḥ
na lakṣyate jayo 'nyo vā viramatv aphalo raṇaḥ

Since you are so evenly matched in fighting prowess, I do not see how either of you can win or lose this duel. Therefore, please stop this useless battle.

COMMENTARY: Since you are equal in ability to fight, I do not see victory in this arena for one of you. Therefore, the fight is useless. You should give it

up without victory.

Text 79.28

na tad-vākyaṁ jagṛhatur baddha-vairau nṛpārthavat
anusmarantāv anyonyaṁ duruktaṁ duṣkṛtāni ca

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] They did not accept Balarāma's request, O King, although it was for a good purpose, for their enmity was deep and long standing. Each of them constantly remembered the insults and injuries he had suffered from the other.

COMMENTARY: Thought Balarāma's words were with purpose or with good cause, they did not accept them. Being deeply inimical for a long time, they constantly remembered mutual insults and injuries.

Text 79.29

diṣṭaṁ tad anumanvāno rāmo dvāravatīṁ yayau
ugrasenādibhiḥ prītair jñātibhiḥ samupāgataḥ

Concluding that the battle was the arrangement of fate, Balarāma went back to Dvārakā. There he was greeted by Ugrasena and his other relatives, who were all delighted to see him.

COMMENTARY: The war had been arranged by Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord (diṣṭam). The war took place by his desire. Since neither of them accepted his words which were with good intentions, he went to give pleasure (rāmaḥ) to Ugrasena, Vasudeva, Pradyumna and others. He met very closely (upagataḥ) with Ugrasena and others, with exchanges of auspicious greetings (sam), near Dvārakā.

Text 79.30

taṁ punar naimiṣaṁ prāptam ṛṣayo 'yājayan mudā
kratv-aṅgaṁ kratubhiḥ sarvair nivṛttākhila-vigraham

Later Balarāma returned to Naimiṣāraṇya, where the sages joyfully engaged him, the embodiment of all sacrifice, in performing various kinds of Vedic sacrifice. Balarāma was now retired from warfare.

COMMENTARY: Though his pilgrimage was completed, he went to Naimisāranya with a desire to perform a sacrifice. He went there with

wealth suitable for sacrifice (pra-aptam), in the best manner with the materials and with his associates. He went without delay (tadā). Another version has mudā (in joy). One of his portions was sacrifice (kratv-aṅgam) or he embodied all parts of sacrifice, or by chanting his name all parts of sacrifice were completed. The sages engaged him in sacrifice. At that time he was qualified because he had given up all fighting. Vigraha means fighting according to Viśva.

Text 79.31

tebhyo viśuddhaṁ vijñānaṁ bhagavān vyatarad vibhuḥ
yenaivātmany ado viśvam ātmānaṁ viśva-gaṁ viduḥ

The all-powerful Balarāma bestowed upon the sages pure spiritual knowledge, by which they could see the whole universe within him and also see him pervading everything.

COMMENTARY: He gave them realization (vijñānam) devoid of a relationship with māyā (viśuddham). The two prefixes vi in these words indicate speciality (vaiśiṣṭya), since the purity and knowledge concerned the Supreme Lord. They directly realized the universe within the Lord, since he was non-different from it, and that the Lord was spread everywhere in the universe as antaryāmī. They could realize this since Balarāma was omniscient (bhagavān) or most merciful and able to give anything (vibhuḥ), or able to fulfill the desires of his devotees.

Text 79.32

sva-patyāvabhṛtha-snāto jñāti-bandhu-suhṛd-vṛtaḥ
reje sva-jyotsnayevenduḥ su-vāsāḥ suṣṭhv alaṅkṛtaḥ

After executing with his wife the avabhṛtha ablutions, the beautifully dressed and ornamented Balarāma, encircled by his immediate family and other relatives and friends, looked as splendid as the moon surrounded by its constellations.

COMMENTARY: He took bath with his wife Revatī. Surrounded by his relatives the Yadus, others related by marriage (bandhu), friends like the leader of Kausala and other friends (mitra) like the king of Mithila, he shone, wearing splendid cloth and being well ornamented, like the moon

with the stars (jyotsnayā). The stars are compared to Revatī and the Yadus, and Balarāma is compared to the moon. One should not think that this was his only activity. He did many other activities as well.

Text 79.33

īdṛg-vidhāny asaṅkhyāni balasya bala-śālinaḥ
anantasyāprameyasya māyā-martyasya santi hi

Countless other such pastimes were performed by Balarāma, since he had great prowess, infinite, inconceivable powers, and a spiritual form of a human endowed with great mercy.

COMMENTARY: Like this, Balarāma performed unlimited other activities since he was endowed with great prowess (bala-śālinaḥ), he could perform unlimited activities (anantasya), he had inconceivable powers (aprameyasya), which made the activities astonishing, and he had a spiritual form of a human being endowed with great mercy (māyā), which made everything most sweet. The cause of all of this was that he was the strongest (balaḥ) of all. The descriptive terms are successively superior. This was certain (hi). The proof was not necessary.

Text 79.34

yo 'nusmareta rāmasya karmāṇy adbhuta-karmaṇaḥ
sāyaṁ prātar anantasya viṣṇoḥ sa dayito bhavet

All the activities of the unlimited Balarāma are amazing. Anyone who regularly remembers them at dawn and dusk will become very dear to the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY: One should not think that glorifying his activities is an exaggeration, for they give great results directly. The person who remembers in his mind constantly Balarāma's activities in the morning and evening becomes the object of the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, who pervades the universe by his appearance in unlimited spiritual forms (viṣṇoḥ), or who entered Balarāma out of great affection. The mercy arises because Balarāma gives great pleasure to his devotees (rāmasya). It is said that Balarāma had some opposition to Kṛṣṇa because he gave mercy to Duryodhana, the enemy of the Pāṇḍavas, who were dear to Kṛṣṇa.

Balarāma's actions are astonishing (adbhuta-karmanaḥ). He increased Duryodhana's pride, which was the cause of his death. When the Pāṇḍavas killed him, they attained great fame. This is because Balarāma's heart was most profound and inscrutable (anantasya). Or, on remembering the pastimes of Balarāma, one becomes at all times the object of the mercy of Kṛṣṇa who appears throughout the universe unlimitedly (viṣṇoḥ anantasya) by manifesting unlimited forms.

Chapter Eighty
The Brāhmaṇa Sudāmā Visits Lord Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā

Text 80.1

śrī-rājovāca
bhagavan yāni cānyāni mukundasya mahātmanaḥ
vīryāṇy ananta-vīryasya śrotum icchāmi he prabho

King Parīkṣit said: My lord, O master, I wish to hear about other valorous deeds performed by Kṛṣṇa, Mukunda, of noble character, whose valor is unlimited.

COMMENTARY: Thinking the story was finished, Parīkṣit asks in longing to hear more. The last verse of the previous chapter mentioned that one becomes the object of the Lord's mercy. That mercy is that one develops taste. Having attained a special taste from hearing the story, Parīkṣit asks for more. O omniscient Śukadeva (bhagavan)! I desire to hear other powerful stories of the Lord who frees one from all suffering (mukundasya) and who has the best nature (mahātmanaḥ). The prayer expresses the imperative mood. This will not happen from hearing the glories of other persons since Kṛṣṇa alone has unlimited powers. I desire to hear only these topics since they have such power. These stories are unlimited. Please tell all of them. "You will live only two or three more days. How is it possible to fulfill that desire? You can give enough lifespan to me, since you are capable (prabho)!" He desires more satisfaction from the topics.

Text 80.2

ko nu śrutvāsakṛd brahmann uttamaḥśloka-sat-kathāḥ
virameta viśeṣa-jño viṣaṇṇaḥ kāma-mārgaṇaiḥ

O brāhmaṇa, how could anyone who experiences the sweetness of the topics and is disgusted with endeavoring for sense gratification give up the transcendental topics of the Lord with excellent glories after hearing them repeatedly?

COMMENTARY: “You have heard many stories. Why do you want to hear more?” After repeatedly hearing about the Lord, who could give up those topics? No one could. This is because the Lord’s glory is most excellent (uttama) or is beyond ignorance and suffering (ut-tama). These topics are the best (sat) among all topics of the Lord since they are about Kṛṣṇa. “But we see many people give up the topics.” The person who realizes the special sweetness and powers of Kṛṣṇa (viśeṣa-jñaḥ) does not give up those topics. Let that be. Having realization (anubhava), one does not give up the topics but also, in order to destroy suffering which is experienced at all times, one does not give up the topics. That person is disgusted with searching for material enjoyment, or is suffering from the arrows of material enjoyment.

Text 80.3

sā vāg yayā tasya guṇān gṛṇīte
karau ca tat-karma-karau manaś ca
smared vasantaṁ sthira-jaṅgameṣu
śṛṇoti tat-puṇya-kathāḥ sa karṇaḥ

Actual speech is that which describes the qualities of the Lord, real hands are those that work for him, a true mind is that which always remembers him dwelling within everything moving and nonmoving, and actual ears are those that listen to sanctifying topics about him.

COMMENTARY: The ears are useless without hearing those topics. In order to show this, Parīkṣit gives examples of other senses. When one develops bhakti for the Lord one seeks out many qualities of the Lord (guṇān). By speech one glorifies the qualities of the Lord. Dissatisfied with one example, he says that all senses should be engaged. By the hands one should engage in work such as deity worship (arcana) and services (paricarya). By the mind one should remember the Lord who is situated everywhere at all times. The ear should listen to the Lord’s topics which purify or are attractive (puṇya). Since the ear is a knowledge gathering sense, and one can gain knowledge using one ear (unlike the hand), karṇaḥ is in the singular. The eye also is singular for this reason (next verse).

Text 80.4

śiras tu tasyobhaya-liṅgam ānamet
tad eva yat paśyati tad dhi cakṣuḥ
aṅgāni viṣṇor atha taj-janānāṁ
pādodakaṁ yāni bhajanti nityam

An actual head is one that bows down to the Lord in his manifestations among the moving and nonmoving creatures, real eyes are those that see only the Lord, and actual limbs are those which regularly honor the water that has bathed the Lord's feet or those of his devotees.

COMMENTARY: One should bow the head completely (ā-namet), touching the ground, to the deity forms of the Lord and to his devotees. The eyes are only (eva) those that see the forms of the Lord and devotees. They should see nothing else. The word eva should be understood with all the limbs.

Then the limbs should with faith always (nityam) hold the water from the forms of the Lord and the devotees. Nityam is placed last to indicate it should be added to all statements in the two verses (3-4). The water should be placed on limbs above the navel since placing the holy water lower than that is forbidden. One can gain perfection by engaging each sense or limb in devotional acts. By producing perfection, the limbs become completely useful. Without doing that, all my limbs are useless. By your mercy only, my ear has become successful.

Text 80.5

sūta uvāca
viṣṇu-rātena sampṛṣṭo bhagavān bādarāyaṇiḥ
vāsudeve bhagavati nimagna-hṛdayo 'bravīt

Suta Gosvāmī said: Thus, questioned by Parīkṣit, the omniscient son of Vyāsa replied, his heart fully absorbed in meditation on Vasudeva's son, full of all sweetness and powers.

COMMENTARY: Parīkṣit is here called Viṣṇu-rāta, he who was given life by the Lord, since his prema increased on realizing the Lord's mercy to him. Śukadeva was questioned by him with great longing (sam-pṛṣṭaḥ). Śukadeva knew the truth about the pastimes of the Lord and was the crest jewel of all omniscient persons (bhagavān). He was the son of Vyāsa who

knew the essence of the Vedānta. On being questioned, his heart became completely absorbed in the son of Vasudeva, full of all powers and mercy. He then spoke, remembering the particulars of the great mercy of the Lord in the stories.

Text 80.6

śrī-śuka uvāca
kṛṣṇasyāsīt sakhā kaścid brāhmaṇo brahma-vittamaḥ
virakta indriyārtheṣu praśāntātmā jitendriyaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Kṛṣṇa had a certain brāhmaṇa friend [named Śrīdāmā] who was most learned in Vedic knowledge and detached from all sense enjoyment. Furthermore, his mind was peaceful and his senses subdued.

COMMENTARY: There was a brāhmaṇa named Śrīdāmā, a friend of Kṛṣṇa who is an ocean of good qualities and mercy, attractive to all minds. Bṛhat-sahasra-nāma says śrīdāmaraṅka-bhaktārthaṁ bhūmyānītendra-vaibhavaḥ: Kṛṣṇa gave the wealth of Indra to earth for his starving devotee Śrīdāmā. He was not only a brāhmaṇa but the best knower of the meaning of the Vedas (vittamaḥ). Since he was fixed in bhakti to the Lord, he was detached from sense enjoyment. "Why?" He was most peaceful because his mind was devoid of lust and lamentation. "Why?" His senses were controlled.

Text 80.7

yadṛcchayopapannena vartamāno gṛhāśramī
tasya bhāryā ku-cailasya kṣut-kṣāmā ca tathā-vidhā

Living as a householder, he maintained himself with whatever came of its own accord. The wife of that poorly dressed brāhmaṇa suffered along with him and was emaciated from hunger.

COMMENTARY: Though a householder, he subsisted on whatever arrived near him without effort. He had a wife who was dressed in badly colored, worn out, soiled cloth. The verb āsīt is understood from the previous sentence. She had qualities similar to his.

Text 80.8

pati-vratā patiṁ prāha mlāyatā vadanena sā
daridraṁ sīdamānā vai vepamānābhigamya ca

The chaste wife of the poverty-stricken brāhmaṇa once approached him, her face dried up because of her distress. Trembling with fear, she spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY: She was afraid of her husband because she thought it was not proper to ask the Lord for anything except devotion. But she was constantly hungry, since her husband was unable to supply necessities. Thus, her face was faded. She became depressed and was trembling.

Text 80.9

nanu brahman bhagavataḥ sakhā sākṣāc chriyaḥ patiḥ
brahmaṇyaś ca śaraṇyaś ca bhagavān sātvatarṣabhaḥ

[Śrīdāmā's wife said:] O brāhmaṇa, isn't it true that the Lord of all wealth is the personal friend of your exalted self? That greatest of Yādavas, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, is compassionate to brāhmaṇas and very affectionate to the surrendered.

COMMENTARY: The Lord whom you worship is your friend. He is the Lord of all visible wealth. "Why would he be friends with me, such a low person?" He is the benefactor of brāhmaṇas. "Why would he be kind to me?" He is affectionate to those who have surrendered (śaraṇyaḥ). "Who is he?" He is Bhagavān, but has descended as the best of the Yadus.

Text 80.10

tam upaihi mahā-bhāga sādhūnāṁ ca parāyaṇam
dāsyati draviṇaṁ bhūri sīdate te kuṭumbine

O fortunate one, please approach him, the real shelter of all saints. He will certainly give abundant wealth to such a suffering householder as you.

COMMENTARY: Therefore, you should approach him. "Since it is not proper, I am afraid and ashamed." He is the shelter of saintly persons like you. Since he is the only shelter, it is not proper not to surrender to him just because you are fearful. "He may give shelter to the saintly, but I am not saintly." But you have great fortune, otherwise how could you make friends with

him? Therefore, he will give you plenty of wealth when you ask him. Moreover, you are suffering from poverty and hunger and you have a family. Thus you are a proper object of his charity.

Text 80.11

āste 'dhunā dvāravatyāṁ bhoja-vṛṣṇy-andhakeśvaraḥ
smarataḥ pāda-kamalam ātmānam api yacchati
kiṁ nv artha-kāmān bhajato nāty-abhīṣṭān jagad-guruḥ

Kṛṣṇa is now the ruler of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas and is staying at Dvārakā. Since he gives even his own self to anyone who simply remembers his lotus feet, what doubt is there that he, the spiritual master of the universe, will not bestow upon his sincere worshiper prosperity and material enjoyment, which are not even very desirable?

COMMENTARY: "To satisfy his friends sometimes he goes to Indraprastha, sometimes to Vṛndāvana, and sometimes to other places to fight demons. How will I meet him, since I cannot go so far away?" Go to Dvārakā which is not far from here. He has stopped fighting and is staying there only in order to enjoy with the Yadus. Or, he had produced all the wealth of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas. Just by going there you will gain all wealth. Or, not too much time had passed after hearing that he was in Dvārakā.

"But he will not give much to such an unqualified person like me." He gives to one who remembers his lotus feet. Possessive case (smarataḥ) is used for the dative case. He gives himself, the Supreme Lord, to one who remembers even one of his feet, just when the devotee begins to think of that foot. He becomes controlled by that person. He gives whatever is desired to one who worships him according to the rules, doing bhakti by hearing and other processes. What more need be said? How much more he will give to one who is fortunate to be his friend! The reason he does not give much to them is that they do not want much.

"Ignoring them, he will not give to them." He is the instructor of all dharma (jagad-guruḥ). Will he not fulfill the desires of the devotee? Or, he is the father of the universe. Just as the father gives to the child out of affection what the child wants even though the child asks for some insignificant toy

when he plays, later he gives all desired wealth such as jewels and ornaments to him. Similarly, the Lord finally gives his supreme abode.

Text 80.12–13

sa evaṁ bhāryayā vipro bahuśaḥ prārthito muhuḥ
ayaṁ hi paramo lābha uttamaḥśloka-darśanam
iti sañcintya manasā gamanāya matiṁ dadhe
apy asty upāyanaṁ kiñcid gṛhe kalyāṇi dīyatām

When his wife thus repeatedly implored him in various ways, the brāhmaṇa thought to himself, "To see Lord Kṛṣṇa is indeed the greatest achievement in life." Thus, he decided to go, but first he told her, "My good wife, if there is anything in the house I can carry as a gift, please give it to me."

COMMENTARY: Bhārya or wife means "one whom the husband must support." He had to follow her words in order to maintain her. The word vipra here means "one who fulfills someone's wish in a particular way (viśeṣeṇa pratikāmam pūrayati)." She implored him with many logical arguments (bahuśaḥ), and many times (muhuḥ). Another version has mṛdu. She implored him gently. Thinking that seeing the Lord was the greatest attainment, he decided to go. He then said (verb should be supplied), "There must be some gift in the house. Please give it." O auspicious wife! You have inspired me with the auspicious act of seeing the lord. To avoid the fault of going empty handed he requests his wife for something to offer to the Lord.

Text 80.14

yācitvā caturo muṣṭīn viprān pṛthuka-taṇḍulān
caila-khaṇḍena tān baddhvā bhartre prādād upāyanam

Śrīdāmā's wife begged four handfuls of flat rice from neighboring brāhmaṇas, tied up the rice in a torn piece of cloth and gave it to her husband as a present for Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: She begged chipped rice from brāhmaṇas. She got four handfuls, since she did not have a goal concerning more or less quantity.

Text 80.15

sa tān ādāya viprāgryaḥ prayayau dvārakāṁ kila
kṛṣṇa-sandarśanaṁ mahyaṁ kathaṁ syād iti cintayan

Taking the flat rice, the saintly brāhmaṇa set off for Dvārakā, all the while wondering "How will I be able to have Kṛṣṇa's audience?"

COMMENTARY: He took the rice since there was nothing else. He departed so it is said (kila).

Text 80.16–17

trīṇi gulmāny atīyāya tisraḥ kakṣāś ca sa-dvijaḥ
vipro 'gamyāndhaka-vṛṣṇīnāṁ gṛheṣv acyuta-dharmiṇām
gṛhaṁ dvy-aṣṭa-sahasrāṇāṁ mahiṣīṇāṁ harer dvijaḥ
viveśaikatamaṁ śrīmad brahmānandaṁ gato yathā

The learned brāhmaṇa, joined by some local brāhmaṇas, passed three guard stations and went through three gateways, and then he walked by the homes of Kṛṣṇa's faithful devotees, the Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis, which ordinarily no one could do. He then entered one of the opulent palaces belonging to Kṛṣṇa's sixteen thousand queens, and when he did so he felt as if he were attaining the bliss of liberation.

COMMENTARY: The description of a gulma, part of an army, is as follows:

nava-dvipaṁ nava-rathaṁ sapta-viṁśati-saptikam
gulmaṁ taj jñaiḥ smṛtaṁ pañca-catvārīmśat padātikam

A gulma has forty-five foot-soldiers, nine elephants, nine chariots and is twenty-seven horses.

However, in this case gulma refers to places for housing troops to protect the city. He passed three such barracks. "How could he enter the houses which were all well-fortified?" They possessed dharma of the Lord who was firmly fixed at all times in his own glories such as being kind to the brāhmaṇas (acyuta). Or as Vaiṣṇavas (acyuta-dharmiṇām), they naturally respected brāhmaṇas and Vaiṣṇavas. He then entered the palace of Rukmiṇī, the best of the palaces. Padma Purāṇa says sa tu rukmiṇyāntaḥ-pura-dvari kṣaṇaṁ tūṣṇīṁ sthitaḥ: he remained silent for a moment at the door of Rukmiṇī's palace. Later it is said tāvac chrīr jagṛhe hastam: Śrī or

Rukmiṇī grabbed his hand. She was the chief queen. It is said rāghavatve ’bhavat sītā rukmiṇī kṛṣṇa-janmani: when Rāma appeared, his consort was Sītā, and when Kṛṣṇa appeared she came as Rukmiṇī. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa) He felt like he had entered the bliss of Brahman. This example is used only to show that he forgot everything else.

Text 80.18

taṁ vilokyācyuto dūrāt priyā-paryaṅkam āsthitaḥ
sahasotthāya cābhyetya dorbhyāṁ paryagrahīn mudā

At that time Acyuta was seated on his consort’s bed. Spotting the brāhmaṇa at some distance, the Lord immediately stood up, went forward to meet him and with great pleasure embraced him.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa (acyutaḥ) did not deviate from friendship, however. It originated, from proper behavior and qualities. He was seated on his consort’s bed. This is Citsukha’s meaning. He embraced Śrīdāmā.

Text 80.19

sakhyuḥ priyasya viprarṣer aṅga-saṅgāti-nirvṛtaḥ
prīto vyamuñcad ab-bindūn netrābhyāṁ puṣkarekṣaṇaḥ

The lotus-eyed Supreme Lord felt intense ecstasy upon touching the body of his dear friend, the wise brāhmaṇa, and thus he shed tears of love.

COMMENTARY: Śrīdhāmā was his friend, since they played together under the same teacher. Among all the friends he was dearest (priyasya), the object of special prema. He was a brāhmaṇa and a sage, who knew the glories of bhakti to the Lord. Kṛṣṇa was blissful and most affectionate (prītaḥ) to him. He shed tears with intensity (vi-amuñcat). He had most beautiful lotus eyes.

Text 80.20–22

athopaveśya paryaṅke svayam sakhyuḥ samarhaṇam
upahṛtyāvanijyāsya pādau pādāvanejanīḥ
agrahīc chirasā rājan bhagavāl̐ loka-pāvanaḥ
vyalimpad divya-gandhena candanāguru-kuṅkamaiḥ

dhūpaiḥ surabhibhir mitraṁ pradīpāvalibhir mudā
arcitvāvedya tāmbūlaṁ gāṁ ca svāgatam abravīt

O King! Kṛṣṇa seated his friend upon the bed. Then the Lord, who purifies the whole world, personally offered him various tokens of respect and washed his feet, after which he sprinkled the water on his own head. He anointed him with divinely fragrant sandalwood, aguru and kuṅkuma pastes and happily worshiped him with aromatic incense and arrays of lamps. After finally offering him betel-nut and the gift of a cow, he welcomed him with pleasing words.

COMMENTARY: After embracing him a long time, he made him sit on the bed by force, since Śrīdāma was afraid to do so. This should be understood in other actions also that Kṛṣṇa personally did the services. He brought articles of worship and personally washed his feet. Though he was the Lord he took the water on his head. By sprinkling water on his own head, he purified the worlds. Though he was the Lord, and purifier of the worlds, he took the water on his head. These actions show Kṛṣṇa's gentle character. He anointed him with fragrant substances ground together and made special patterns on his limbs (vi-alimpat). He also fed him milk rice and had him bathed. This is understood from later verses.

Text 80.23

ku-cailaṁ malinaṁ kṣāmaṁ dvijaṁ dhamani-santatam
devī paryacarat sākṣāc cāmara-vyajanena vai

By fanning him with her cāmara, the divine goddess of fortune personally served that poor brāhmaṇa, whose clothing was torn and dirty and who was so thin that veins were visible all over his body.

COMMENTARY: Since he had worn-out clothing, Kṛṣṇa also gave him new clothes. The reason is revealed later. His body was discolored (malinam) because of suffering from cold. From the description of his condition it was not proper for Rukmiṇī to worship him. The descriptive elements are in order of increasing intensity. Still she worshipped him, though she was directly the queen of Kṛṣṇa. This shows her affection for brāhmaṇas.

Text 80.24

antaḥ-pura-jano dṛṣṭvā kṛṣṇenāmala-kīrtinā
vismito ’bhūd ati-prītyā avadhūtaṁ sabhājitam

The people in the royal palace were astonished to see Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of spotless glory, so lovingly honor this shabbily dressed brāhmaṇa.

COMMENTARY: Seeing the renounced person being worshipped by Kṛṣṇa the people were astonished.

Text 80.25–26

kim anena kṛtaṁ puṇyam avadhūtena bhikṣuṇā
śriyā hīnena loke ’smin garhitenādhamena ca
yo ’sau tri-loka-guruṇā śrī-nivāsena sambhṛtaḥ
paryaṅka-sthāṁ śriyaṁ hitvā pariṣvakto ’gra-jo yathā

[The residents of the palace said:] What pious acts has this unkempt, impoverished brāhmaṇa performed? People regard him as lowly and contemptible, yet the spiritual master of the three worlds, the abode of Lakṣmī, is serving him reverently. Leaving the goddess of fortune sitting on her bed, the Lord has embraced this brāhmaṇa as if he were an older brother.

COMMENTARY: This brāhmaṇa is a beggar, without wealth (śriyā), and criticized in this world (garhitena) and is low (adhamena). He does not have a pious birth. The word asau indicates that this person was directly present. He was served by the Lord who is worshipped by Brahmā and others (trikoka-guruṇā), within whom wealth resides constantly (ni-vāsena). This indicates that the Lord should not have respected him since he was devoid of wealth. Of course, the Lord should respect brāhmaṇas, but at least he should not embrace this brāhmaṇa. And the Lord even gave up Lakṣmī (priyam) on the couch. Sometimes śriyam is seen instead of priyam. Moreover, he embraced the brāhmaṇa with the greatest affection as if he were an elder brother. This verse represents the words of the residents of the palace. It would not be improper for the Lord to treat others in this manner, however.

Text 80.27

kathayāṁ cakratur gāthāḥ pūrvā guru-kule satoḥ
ātmanor lalitā rājan karau gṛhya parasparam

Taking each other's hands, O King, Kṛṣṇa and the brāhmaṇa talked pleasantly about how they once lived together in the school of their guru.

COMMENTARY: As if to relieve the palace residents of astonishment, but actually to produce the happiness of friends in mutual exchange, the Lord revealed his great affection. Taking each other's hands, they talked of their previous lives in the guru's house. Kula means house. This talk was most attractive to all the world (lalitāḥ). Because the Lord showed friendliness by taking his hand, Śrīdāmā also expressed friendship by taking his hand (parasparam).

Text 80.28

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
api brahman guru-kulād bhavatā labdha-dakṣiṇāt
samāvṛttena dharma-jña bhāryoḍhā sadṛśī na vā

The Supreme Lord said: My dear brāhmaṇa, you know well the ways of dharma. After you offered the gift of remuneration to our guru and returned home from his school, did you marry a compatible wife or not?

COMMENTARY: Api indicates a question, and applies to later verses also. If you graduated, in order to avoid the fault of having no āśrama, you must have accepted a wife since you are a knower of dharma.

Text 80.29

prāyo gṛheṣu te cittam akāma-vihitaṁ tathā
naivāti-prīyase vidvan dhaneṣu viditaṁ hi me

Even though you are mostly involved in household affairs, your mind is not affected by material desires. Nor, O learned one, do you take much pleasure in the pursuit of material wealth. This I am well aware of.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa makes this statement in order to hint at his destitute condition. The prefixes vi and ati and the word prāyaḥ indicate a condition of being overcome by desires. Sudāmā was not like that. His intention is to say, "I will give you what you desire."

Text 80.30

kecit kurvanti karmāṇi kāmair ahata-cetasaḥ
tyajantaḥ prakṛtīr daivīr yathāhaṁ loka-saṅgraham

Some people execute prescribed karmas with their minds undisturbed by mundane desires. Some renounce all material propensities, which spring from the Lord's illusory energy. They act as I do, to instruct the general populace.

COMMENTARY: Some do their household dharmas without attachment. But some give up material life completely. "Some may take the latter option, but the first option is not possible." But I act in this way to teach the people.

Text 80.31

kaccid guru-kule vāsaṁ brahman smarasi nau yataḥ
dvijo vijñāya vijñeyaṁ tamasaḥ pāram aśnute

My dear brāhmaṇa, do you remember how we lived together in our spiritual master's school? When a twice-born student has learned from his guru all that is to be learned, he can enjoy Vaikuṇṭha, which lies beyond all ignorance.

COMMENTARY: Maunam sammati-lakṣaṇam: silence is a sign of consent. Seeing that Śrīdāmā agreed by silence, Kṛṣṇa begins to relate a story to show the cause of their friendship. In order destroy criticizing the fault of enduring great hardships, which he will now relate, and show that this life was a cause of happiness, he glorifies service to guru in four verses (31-34). Do you remember our residence? Realizing that knowledge, one surpasses ignorance with all its suffering, and attains Vaikuṇṭha (param). The prefix vi in vijñānāṁ indicates knowledge of the Lord.

Text 80.32

sa vai sat-karmaṇāṁ sākṣād dvijāter iha sambhavaḥ
ādyo 'ṅga yatrāśramiṇāṁ yathāhaṁ jñāna-do guruḥ

My dear friend, he who gives a person his physical birth is his first spiritual master, and he who initiates him as a dvija āṇand engages him in dharma is indeed more directly his spiritual master. But the person who

bestows spiritual knowledge upon the members of all the spiritual orders of society is one's ultimate spiritual master. He is as good as my own self.

COMMENTARY: Sa vai should be repeated with each statement. He is the first guru who gives one birth (sambhavaḥ) in this world (iha). He is the second guru who gives birth as a second born. He who gives knowledge of the Lord is the highest guru. Still all these gurus should be taken as equal, for in verse 34 he concludes by saying that service to the guru is the most satisfying to him.

Text 80.33

nanv artha-kovidā brahman varṇāśrama-vatām iha
ye mayā guruṇā vācā taranty añjo bhavārṇavam

Certainly, O brāhmaṇa, of all the followers of the varṇāśrama system, those who take advantage of the words I speak in my form as the guru and thus easily cross over the ocean of material existence best understand their own true welfare.

COMMENTARY: Nanu means certainly. By this knowledge (vijñanām), by bhakti, one attains the happiness of crossing the material ocean, as a by-product of bhakti.

Text 80.34

nāham ijyā-prajātibhyāṁ tapasopaśamena vā
tuṣyeyaṁ sarva-bhūtātmā guru-śuśrūṣayā yathā

I, the Soul of all beings, am not as satisfied by ritual worship, brahminical initiation, penances or self-discipline as I am by faithful service rendered to one's guru.

COMMENTARY: As antaryāmī of all beings, though I am satisfied by service to them, I am especially satisfied by service to the guru. Without that, other actions become useless, since guru is directly my form, by my entering into him, and he is my best devotee. I am not satisfied with gṛhastha-dharma (ijyā), brahmacāri¬-dharma (āprajātiā), vānaprastha-dharma (tapasā) or sannyāsa-dharma (upaśamena). Or I am not satisfied with the worship of me (ijyā), with dīkṣa of my mantra (prajāti), samādhi on my form (tapasā) or being completely fixed in me (upaśamena) as much as I am satisfied

with service to the guru who inspires these actions. Thus there is a guru for sva-dharma in the first list ā and a guru for bhagavad-dharma in the second list. The second type of guru is superior.

Text 80.35–36

api naḥ smaryate brahman vṛttaṁ nivasatāṁ gurau
guru-dāraiś coditānām indhanānayane kvacit
praviṣṭānāṁ mahāraṇyam apartau su-mahad dvija
vāta-varṣam abhūt tīvraṁ niṣṭhurāḥ stanayitnavaḥ

O brāhmaṇa, do you remember what happened to us while we were living with our spiritual master? Once our guru's wife sent us to fetch firewood, and after we entered the vast forest, O twice-born one, an unseasonal storm arose, with fierce wind and rain and harsh thunder.

COMMENTARY: Having glorified service to guru, Kṛṣṇa now shows how to serve him in order to teach the people. The example shows that by suffering together the two established a firm friendship. The dual number was used previously. Now the plural nau is used to indicate Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Śrīdāmā. Balarāma is indicated as being one of them, out of affection. Gurau means "in the house of the guru." Kṛṣṇa addresses Śrīdāmā as a brāhmaṇa frequently to destroy his shyness and fear. Calling out to him, making the friendship firm, he makes him raise his head in order to see Kṛṣṇa and thus give him joy. When we had entered the forest, an unseasonal storm, belonging to the cold season, occurred. It was painful (tīvram). O brāhmaṇa! He calls out to Sudāmā on remembering the past events, or with amusement. The thunder was piercing, making loud noises. There was also lightning.

Text 80.37

sūryaś cāstaṁ gatas tāvat tamasā cāvṛtā diśaḥ
nimnaṁ kūlaṁ jala-mayaṁ na prājñāyata kiñcana

Then, as the sun set, the forest was covered by darkness in every direction, and with all the flooding we could not distinguish high land from low.

COMMENTARY: The word ca is repeated to show that the sun set and darkness appeared simultaneously. We could clearly not distinguish low from high land since the place became flooded with water.

Text 80.38

vayaṁ bhṛśam tatra mahānilāmbubhir
nihanyamānā mahur ambu-samplave
diśo 'vidanto 'tha parasparaṁ vane
gṛhīta-hastāḥ paribabhrimāturāḥ

Constantly besieged by the powerful wind and rain, we lost our way amidst the flooding waters. We simply held each other's hands and, in great distress, wandered aimlessly about the forest.

COMMENTARY: We wandered all around. Babhrima is used instead of babhramima as poetic license.

Text 80.39

etad viditvā udite ravau sāndīpanir guruḥ
anveṣamāṇo naḥ śiṣyān ācāryo 'paśyad āturān

Our guru, Sāndīpani, understanding our predicament, set out after sunrise to search for us, his disciples, and found us in distress.

COMMENTARY: Intuiting our distress (etat), the great (guruḥ) Sāndīpani searched for us.

Text 80.40

aho he putrakā yūyam asmad-arthe 'ti-duḥkhitāḥ
ātmā vai prāṇinām preṣṭhas tam anādṛtya mat-parāḥ

[Sāndīpani said:] O my children, you have suffered so much for my sake! The body is most dear to every living creature, but you are so dedicated to me that you completely disregarded your own comfort.

COMMENTARY: All creatures take their own body as the dearest. Without regard for your body, you suffered for me (mat-parāḥ). The first line uses the plural asmad-arthe (for us) and the second line uses the singular mat-parāḥ (dedicated to me). Mat-parāḥ thus means "you suffered on account of me and those related to me."

Text 80.41

etad eva hi sac-chiṣyaiḥ kartavyaṁ guru-niṣkṛtam
yad vai viśuddha-bhāvena sarvārthātmārpaṇaṁ gurau

This indeed is the duty of all true disciples: to repay the debt to their spiritual master by offering him, with pure hearts, their wealth and even their very lives.

COMMENTARY: You have truly done service to guru.

Text 80.42

tuṣṭo 'haṁ bho dvija-śreṣṭhāḥ satyāḥ santu manorathāḥ
chandāṁsy ayāta-yāmāni bhavantv iha paratra ca

You boys are first-class dvijas, and I am satisfied with you. May all your desires be fulfilled, and may the Vedic mantras you have learned never lose their meaning for you, in this world or the next.

COMMENTARY: I am satisfied with you three. May the Vedic mantras not be worn out, nor lose their results, and nor be forgotten by you (ayāta-yāmāni). Yāta-yāma means worn out according to Nānārtha-varga of Amara-koṣa.

Text 80.43

itthaṁ-vidhāny anekāni vasatāṁ guru-veśmani
guror anugraheṇaiva pumān pūrṇaḥ praśāntaye

We had many similar experiences while living in our spiritual master's home. Simply by the grace of the spiritual master a person can attain the highest happiness and realization of the Lord.

COMMENTARY: By the mercy of guru all one's desires are fulfilled, and one attains liberation in the form of the highest happiness and experiencing Bhagavān (praśāntaye).

Text 80.44

śrī-brāhmaṇa uvāca
kim asmābhir anirvṛttaṁ deva-deva jagad-guro
bhavatā satya-kāmena yeṣāṁ vāso guror abhūt

The brāhmaṇa said: What could I possibly have failed to achieve, O Lord of lords, O universal teacher, since I was able to personally live with you, whose every desire is fulfilled, at the home of our spiritual master?

COMMENTARY: In two verses Sudāmā answers in brief everything. What could not be achieved by us? Everything you asked and did not ask about me has been achieved since you are the lord of the devatās and the teacher of the universe and since all your desires are fulfilled (satya-kāmena).

Text 80.45

yasya cchando-mayaṁ brahma deha āvapanaṁ vibho
śreyasāṁ tasya guruṣu vāso 'tyanta-viḍambanam

O almighty Lord, your body comprises the Absolute Truth in the form of the Vedas and is thus the source of all auspicious goals of life. That you took up residence at the school of a spiritual master is simply one of your pastimes in which you play the role of a human being.

COMMENTARY: What was the use of my studying? You are to be understood by the Vedas (cchando-mayam). Your body is the source of all human goals (śreyasām). Thus, living in the guru's house was simply some imitation, some amusement for your pastimes.

Chapter Eighty-one
The Lord Blesses Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa

Text 81.1–2

śrī-śuka uvāca
sa itthaṁ dvija-mukhyena saha saṅkathayan hariḥ
sarva-bhūta-mano-'bhijñaḥ smayamāna uvāca tam
brahmaṇyo brāhmaṇaṁ kṛṣṇo bhagavān prahasan priyam
premṇā nirīkṣaṇenaiva prekṣan khalu satāṁ gatiḥ

Kṛṣṇa perfectly knows the hearts of all living beings, and he is especially devoted to the brāhmaṇas. While the Supreme Lord, the goal of all saintly persons, conversed in this way with the best of the twice-born, he laughed and spoke the following words to that dear friend, all the while smiling and looking upon him with affection.

COMMENTARY: He (saḥ), endowed with previously described qualities of affection for brāhmaṇas and devotees, since he was attractive to all (hariḥ), gave joy through talking (saṅkathanyan) with the best of brāhmaṇas, the best since he was a great friend. This was because he knew the minds of all beings, since he was Bhagavān and more particularly, Kṛṣṇa. He saw that Śrīdāmā had brought grains of rice with effort from far away for him, to add to Kṛṣṇa's wealth. He was keeping the grains carefully, even now, not throwing them in water or elsewhere. He was shy to give the grains to Kṛṣṇa. In talking to his friend, the Lord understood this. He smiled and looked at his friend with prema in a special way (prekṣan), with joy, pleasure and curiosity, while glancing at the knot in his cloth, indicating "When will he give it to me?" This was because the Lord was kind to all brāhmaṇas, what to speak of his friend. Because he did not give the rice, the Lord smiled. "Why do you not give what was given to you by your wife as a gift for me?" He then spoke, since Śrīdāmā was a friend (priyam) and Kṛṣṇa was the ultimate shelter of the devotees (satāṁ gatiḥ). Khalu is ornamental.

Text 81.3

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
kim upāyanam ānītaṁ brahman me bhavatā gṛhāt
aṇv apy upāhṛtaṁ bhaktaiḥ premṇā bhury eva me bhavet
bhūry apy abhaktopahṛtaṁ na me toṣāya kalpate

The Supreme Lord said: O brāhmaṇa, what gift have you brought me from home? I regard as great even the smallest gift offered by my devotees in pure love, but even great offerings presented by nondevotees do not please me.

COMMENTARY: What have you brought? Please tell me, or please give it. O brāhmaṇa! Since you know the Vedas, it is not proper to keep for yourself what you have brought for me. This is his joking intention in addressing Sudāmā as a brāhmaṇa. You have brought it from your house, from your wife. You are not acting like a friend. Though the gift was sent by your devoted wife, you hesitate to give it to me. He then encourages him, giving up joking. I will accept what is given, since I have proper behavior. Even a small gift like rice, if offered out of love (premṇā) by persons endowed with respect (bhaktaiḥ) and prema, is very satisfying to me. Or that which is offered by the devotees satisfies me because I have prema for the devotees (premṇā). What is offered by persons without respect or without devotion will not satisfy me. I am not pleased with those persons.

Text 81.4

patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyaṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ

If one offers me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I will accept it.

COMMENTARY: Not having anything among leaves and flowers, if one can obtain even one leaf or flower or fruit, I accept it if the person offers with prema (bhaktyā), excellently (pra-yacchati). “Why?” It is offered with love. The cause of my accepting is simply that they offer it, not using mantras, etc. The word bhakti is mentioned twice to express the Lord’s greed for the devotee. “Why is it offered with bhakti?” That person has a pure heart (prayatātmanaḥ), without material desire. Though leaves and flowers cannot be eaten, the word “I eat” (aśnāmi) is used. The word means “I

enjoy, like eating." Or if there is nothing to eat, I will even eat the leaf and flower. I will consume water and fruit if they are offered. Thought water is drunk, not eaten, the word is used to indicate satisfaction.

Text 81.5

ity ukto 'pi dvijas tasmai vrīḍitaḥ pataye śriyaḥ
pṛthuka-prasṛtiṁ rājan na prāyacchad avāṅ-mukhaḥ

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Even after being addressed in this way, O King, the brāhmaṇa felt too embarrassed to offer his palmfuls of flat rice to the husband of the goddess of fortune. He simply kept his head bowed in shame.

COMMENTARY: Śrīdāmā still did not willingly offer his four handfuls of rice to Kṛṣṇa but in embarrassment stood with a downcast face. He was embarrassed because Kṛṣṇa was the husband of Lakṣmī.

Text 81.6–7

sarva-bhūtātma-dṛk sākṣāt tasyāgamana-kāraṇam
vijñāyācintayan nāyaṁ śrī-kāmo mābhajat purā
patnyāḥ pati-vratāyās tu sakhā priya-cikīrṣayā
prāpto mām asya dāsyāmi sampado 'martya-durlabhāḥ

Being the direct witness in the hearts of all living beings, Kṛṣṇa fully understood why his friend had come to see him. Thus he thought, "In the past my friend has never worshiped me out of a desire for material opulence, but now he comes to me to satisfy his chaste and devoted wife. I will give him riches that even the immortal devatās cannot obtain."

COMMENTARY: What did the Lord do? This is explained in four verses (6-9). The Lord is directly the witness of all ātmās in all beings, the antaryāmī, and not less (sākṣat). Viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat: by one of my portions I pervade the universe. (BG 10.47) Amara-koṣa says sākṣāt means visible and equal. Understanding thoroughly (vijñāya), he thought as follows.

"In previous lives he did not worship me with the desire for wealth. He worshipped me for friendship. Why then has he come now for wealth? He

has come to please his wife, who is devoted to him. One should beg under a condition where dharma could be destroyed. She therefore sent him to beg from me, so she could serve him nicely. Why did he not go to some other generous person? He is my friend. It would not be the act of a friend to come here other than out of friendship for me. He has come simply to see me as a friend. I will give to him (asya) or I will give because he (asya) is dependent on me. Or my giving is only to please his wife. Thus my giving is only in relation to that. Thus it is said, "I am giving on account of him (asya dasyāmi)."

Text 81.8

itthaṁ vicintya vasanāc cīra-baddhān dvi-janmanaḥ
svayaṁ jahāra kim idam iti pṛthuka-taṇḍulān

Thinking like this, the Lord snatched from the brāhmaṇa's garment the grains of flat rice tied up in an old piece of cloth and exclaimed, "What is this?"

COMMENTARY: Thinking thoroughly in this manner, Kṛṣṇa took for himself the rice in order to perfect the brāhmaṇa's wealth. If he did not do this, he could not procure what is not givenṣṭ. Rukmiṇī will also express this in verse 11. Thinking of his great bhakti, he took the rice by force, saying "What is this?" He took from the brāhmaṇa. This suggests that the rice and the cloth were purifying.

Text 81.9

nanv etad upanītaṁ me parama-prīṇanaṁ sakhe
tarpayanty aṅga māṁ viśvam ete pṛthuka-taṇḍulāḥ

"My friend, have you brought this for me? It gives me extreme pleasure. These few grains of flat rice will satisfy not only me but also the entire universe."

COMMENTARY: Did you bring this for me? Do not think that this is not a fit gift for me. It is most pleasing to me because you are my friend (sakhe). O friend! You have brought this out of friendship. You should not think that this is meager. Since it satisfies me, the soul of the universe, I can satisfy

the whole universe. Or just as watering the root of the tree satisfies all its limbs, by satisfying me the whole universe is satisfied.

Text 81.10

iti muṣṭiṁ sakṛj jagdhvā dvitīyāṁ jagdhum ādade
tāvac chrīr jagṛhe hastaṁ tat-parā parameṣṭhinaḥ

After saying this, the Supreme Lord ate one palmful and was about to eat a second when the devoted goddess Rukmiṇī took hold of his hand.

COMMENTARY: Tāvat expresses excess. More should not be taken. Rukmiṇī grasped the hand of the Supreme Lord since she was devoted to him. She could not tolerate him accepting the lowly chipped rice.

Text 81.11

etāvatālaṁ viśvātman sarva-sampat-samṛddhaye
asmin loke 'tha vāmuṣmin puṁsas tvat-toṣa-kāraṇam

[Queen Rukmiṇī said:] This is more than enough, O Soul of the universe, to secure him an abundance of all kinds of wealth in this world and the next. This is a cause for your satisfaction.

COMMENTARY: "What did she say when she grasped his hand to reveal her intentions?" What is the need of taking the second handful of rice? There is no necessity of taking more. This much will satisfy you so that all living beings can attain an increase of wealth of all human goals up to prema, in this life and the next. He has attained that simply by his gift of one handful of rice offered with the highest devotion. All wealth is achieved just by the glance of my reflected expansion, Lakṣmī, who is the deity of material wealth. Why do you, my supreme shelter, endeavor for giving him wealth? His house is full of wealth now. If you desire to give him visible wealth now, that wealth is already accomplished in his house. You have already said that even a little offering made with bhakti and prema would satisfy you greatly. Therefore by eating his offering you have become satisfied, and then the other goal is fulfilled: his wealth will become most abundant. Why is this necessary? O soul of the universe—by satisfying you, everything becomes perfect! All my companions can then take the remainder and divide it up and eat a little with respect.

Śrīdhara Svāmī explains the previous two verses as follows. Accepting one handful of rice is sufficient (alam), for one attains all wealth in this and the next life by my glance. In this way she is devoted to him (tat-parāḥ). Therefore do not make me dependent on him by taking a second handful. Seeing his wealth is the cause of your satisfaction. Karaṇam acts as an adverb and is thus in the neuter. Alam means "sufficient because of your dedication to dharma" rather than "sufficient in wealth."

Text 81.12

brāhmaṇas tāṁ tu rajanīm uṣitvācyuta-mandire
bhuktvā pītvā sukhaṁ mene ātmānaṁ svar-gataṁ yathā

The brāhmaṇa spent that night in Acyuta's palace after eating and drinking to his full satisfaction. He felt as if he had gone to the spiritual world.

COMMENTARY: After the day passed, he spent one night at the palace of the Lord who was full of complete bliss (acyuta). The palace was like a temple (mandire). He ate and drank happily. He thought he was in heaven. This is an expression for material people. Or svargatim can mean Vaikuṇṭha since it was already mentioned that he was in the temple of the Lord. Svaḥ can mean Vaikuṇṭha also, for it is said svaś-cūḍāmaṇiṁ subhagayantam ivātma-dhiṣṇyam: it appeared that the Lord was personally spreading the beauty and good fortune of the spiritual world. (SB 3.15.39) It was like (yathā) the spiritual world because Dvārakā was the supreme Vaikuṇṭha, being eternal. Another version has suptvā. He slept with the Lord. The meter in that case would be deficient by one syllable. This metrical deficiency was because of the great bliss of the speaker.

Text 81.13

śvo-bhūte viśva-bhāvena sva-sukhenābhivanditaḥ
jagāma svālayaṁ tāta pathy anuvrajya nanditaḥ

The next day, the brāhmaṇa set off for home while being honored by Kṛṣṇa, the self-satisfied maintainer of the universe. The brāhmaṇa felt greatly delighted, my dear King, as he walked along the road.

COMMENTARY: Then what happened? After he got up the next morning, he was honored by Kṛṣṇa, the protector of lords of the universe—who could therefore give all happiness to his devotees. This was proper since the Lord was endowed with affection for brāhmaṇas. Internally Śrīdāmā thought, "I came here to ask for some wealth and did not do that!" Without even meeting Balarāma, he quickly departed for his house. Going to the edge of the city, he spoke gentle words with Kṛṣṇa, while walking. He circled Kṛṣṇa, offered respects, folded his hands, gazed at Kṛṣṇa's face, and then left in joy. Śukadeva calls out jokingly to Parīkṣit to indicate that Kṛṣṇa did not give Śrīdāmā anything when he departed.

Text 81.14

sa cālabdhvā dhanaṁ kṛṣṇān na tu yācitavān svayam
sva-gṛhān vrīḍito 'gacchan mahad-darśana-nirvṛtaḥ

Although he had apparently received no wealth from Kṛṣṇa, he was too shy to beg for it on his own. He simply returned home, feeling perfectly satisfied to have had the Supreme Lord's audience.

COMMENTARY: Though he had not received anything from his friend, he returned home. He had not asked for anything because he was shy. He was blissful because of seeing the Lord.

Text 81.15

aho brahmaṇya-devasya dṛṣṭā brahmaṇyatā mayā
yad daridratamo lakṣmīm āśliṣṭo bibhratorasi

Kṛṣṇa is known to be devoted to the brāhmaṇas, and now I have personally seen this devotion. He who carries the goddess of fortune on his chest has embraced the poorest beggar.

COMMENTARY: Eight and a half verses (15-23) describe Sudāmā's thoughts and then his transformed house. Aho expresses astonishment. The Lord carries Lakṣmī on his chest in the form of a golden line.

Text 81.16

kvāhaṁ daridraḥ pāpīyān kva kṛṣṇaḥ śrī-niketanaḥ
brahma-bandhur iti smāhaṁ bāhubhyāṁ parirambhitaḥ

Who am I? A sinful, poor fallen brāhmaṇa. And who is Kṛṣṇa? The Supreme Lord, full in six powers. Nonetheless, he has embraced me with his two arms.

COMMENTARY: He expands on the previous verse. Am I some special jīva? Is not Kṛṣṇa Svayam Bhagavān? Moreover, I am poverty stricken, sinful, with no good fortune. But he is the abode of Lakṣmī. By his nature, he is full of all wealth. He is full of all śaktis. Just because I was born in a brāhmaṇa family, he has embraced me with his two arms. That is amazing (sma). He embraced me because I am a brāhmaṇa, not because I am a friend. By this, he expresses his extreme lack of qualification. He praises the Lord for being affectionate to brāhmaṇas, rather than being affectionate to devotees.

Text 81.17

nivāsitaḥ priyā-juṣṭe paryaṅke bhrātaro yathā
mahiṣyā vījitaḥ śrānto bāla-vyajana-hastayā

He treated me just like one of his brothers, making me sit on the couch of his beloved consort. And because I was fatigued, his queen personally fanned me with a cāmara.

COMMENTARY: Not only did he embrace me but he sat me on Rukmiṇī's couch, on which she always sat with the Lord. Instead of śriyā sometimes priyā is seen. Moreover, he did this with great respect and affection, as if I were his younger brother like Gada. Moreover, Rukmiṇī fanned me with a cāmara since I was tired from travelling so far. This shows their mercy to him.

Text 81.18

śuśrūṣayā paramayā pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ
pūjito deva-devena vipra-devena deva-vat

Although he is the Lord of all devatās and the object of worship for all brāhmaṇas, he worshiped me as if I were a devatā myself, massaging my feet and rendering other humble services.

COMMENTARY: Moreover, I was welcomed (pūjitaḥ) by his serving me, in the form of massaging my feet though he is worshipped by the devatās and brāhmaṇas. I was worshipped as if I were his family deity.

Text 81.19

svargāpavargayoḥ puṁsāṁ rasāyāṁ bhuvi sampadām
sarvāsām api siddhīnāṁ mūlaṁ tac-caraṇārcanam

Devotional service to his lotus feet is the root cause of all the perfections a person can find in heaven, in liberation, in the subterranean regions and on earth.

COMMENTARY: Worship of his feet is the cause of all wealth and power on earth or lower planets, for the destruction of saṁsāra and attainment of Svarga. Even if one performs perfectly other methods, there are obstacles, whereas if one just remembers his lotus feet one attains the goal perfectly. "Worship of his feet" means the performance of bhakti. But I did not perform bhakti since I only offered him a handful of chipped rice.

Text 81.20

adhano 'yaṁ dhanaṁ prāpya mādyann uccair na māṁ smaret
iti kāruṇiko nūnaṁ dhanaṁ me 'bhūri nādadāt

Thinking "If this poor wretch suddenly becomes rich, he will forget me in his intoxicating happiness," the compassionate Lord did not grant me even a little wealth.

Text 81.21–23

iti tac cintayann antaḥ prāpto nija-gṛhāntikam
sūryānalendu-saṅkāśair vimānaiḥ sarvato vṛtam
vicitropavanodyānaiḥ kūjad-dvija-kulākulaiḥ
protphulla-kumudāmbhoja-kahlārotpala-vāribhiḥ
juṣṭaṁ sv-alaṅkṛtaiḥ pumbhiḥ strībhiś ca hariṇākṣibhiḥ
kim idaṁ kasya vā sthānaṁ kathaṁ tad idam ity abhūt

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thinking thus to himself, Sudāmā finally came to the place where his home stood. But that place was now crowded on all sides with towering, celestial palaces rivaling the combined brilliance of the sun, fire and the moon. There were splendorous courtyards and gardens, each filled with flocks of cooing birds and beautified by ponds in which white, blue, pink and fragrant lotuses grew. Finely attired men and doe-eyed women stood in

attendance. Sudāmā wondered, "What is all this? Whose property is it? How has this all come about?"

COMMENTARY: Thinking deeply about the Lord's glories and him being the cause of wealth (iti), he saw his place surrounded by heavenly houses like airplanes, shining like the sun and fire. Thinking within about Kṛṣṇa's mercy, he thought, "Never have I heard of this secret of his." But he did not say anything aloud. His houses were like airplanes. Bṛhat-sahasranāma-stotra says śrīdāma-raṅgka-bhaktārtha-bhūmyānītendra-vaibhavaḥ: the Lord brought the wealth of Indra to earth for his poor devotee Śrīdāmā. There were white lotuses (kumuda), blue lotuses (utpala), pink lotuses (ambhoja) and fragrant lotuses (kahlāra). He had male and female servants. The women were also well ornamented (though the adjective is in the masculine). While he had stayed overnight in Dvārakā and his wife slept in the house, the house had taken this divine form. In the morning when she woke up on seeing the transformation, she was surprised. Then she understood that it must have happened because of her husband's association with the Lord in Dvārakā. She then sent people to various places on the path to await the coming of her husband.

Text 81.24

evaṁ mīmāṁsamānaṁ taṁ narā nāryo 'mara-prabhāḥ
pratyagṛhṇan mahā-bhāgaṁ gīta-vādyena bhūyasā

As he continued to ponder in this way, the beautiful men and maidservants, as effulgent as devatās, came forward to greet their greatly fortunate master with loud song and instrumental music.

COMMENTARY: "How did these persons with divine forms attain such glory though they were serving the brāhmaṇa who was so poor?" He was most fortunate. This astonished everyone. His fortune had created their good fortune.

Text 81.25

patim āgatam ākarṇya patny uddharṣāti-sambhramā
niścakrāma gṛhāt tūrṇaṁ rūpiṇī śrīr ivālayāt

When she heard that her husband had arrived, the brāhmaṇa's wife quickly came out of the house in a jubilant flurry. She resembled the goddess of fortune herself emerging from her divine abode.

COMMENTARY: Hearing from the servants sent on the road, she then came to meet him. She had become like Lakṣmī or Rukmiṇī in beauty. She came out of the house which was like Vaikuṇṭha.

Text 81.26

pati-vratā patiṁ dṛṣṭvā premotkaṇṭhāśru-locanā
mīlitākṣy anamad buddhyā manasā pariṣasvaje

When the chaste lady saw her husband, her eyes filled with tears of love and eagerness. As she held her eyes closed, she solemnly bowed down to him, and in her heart she embraced him.

COMMENTARY: Her eyes were filled with tears of love and longing. She closed them out of shyness. She embraced him in her mind, not directly. With her intelligence she offered respects thinking, "The husband is the one guru for a woman." When attraction becomes prominent, one may offer embraces just by the mind.

Text 81.27

patnīṁ vīkṣya visphurantīṁ devīṁ vaimānikīm iva
dāsīnāṁ niṣka-kaṇṭhīnāṁ madhye bhāntīṁ sa vismitaḥ

Sudāmā was amazed to see his wife. Shining forth in the midst of maidservants adorned with jeweled lockets, she looked as effulgent as a devatā in her celestial airplane.

Text 81.28

prītaḥ svayaṁ tayā yuktaḥ praviṣṭo nija-mandiram
maṇi-stambha-śatopetaṁ mahendra-bhavanaṁ yathā

With pleasure he took his wife with him and entered his house, where there were hundreds of gem-studded pillars, just as in the palace of Indra.

COMMENTARY: First he was pleased. Then he went with her. Suddenly his body also became beautiful and suitable for the house. He then entered

the house with her.

Text 81.29–32

payaḥ-phena-nibhāḥ śayyā dāntā rukma-paricchadāḥ
paryaṅkā hema-daṇḍāni cāmara-vyajanāni ca
āsanāni ca haimāni mṛdūpastaraṇāni ca
muktādāma-vilambīni vitānāni dyumanti ca
svaccha-sphaṭika-kuḍyeṣu mahā-mārakateṣu ca
ratna-dīpā bhrājamānā lalanā ratna-saṁyutāḥ
vilokya brāhmaṇas tatra samṛddhīḥ sarva-sampadām
tarkayām āsa nirvyagraḥ sva-samṛddhim ahaitukīm

In Sudāmā's home were beds as soft and white as the foam of milk, with bedsteads made of ivory and ornamented with gold. There were also couches with golden legs, as well as royal cāmara fans, golden thrones, soft cushions and gleaming canopies hung with strings of pearls. Upon the walls of sparkling crystal glass, inlaid with precious emeralds, shone jeweled lamps, and the women in the palace were all adorned with precious gems. As he viewed luxury of all varieties, the brāhmaṇa calmly reasoned to himself about his unexpected prosperity.

COMMENTARY: Four verses describe the house. There were cāmaras and fans made of palm leaves. The walls of the recreational rooms were made of clear crystal and rooms were filled with many (mahā) emeralds. Or there were many gems serving as lamps in rooms made of huge emeralds.

There were women decorated with jeweled ornaments, holding jewel lamps. Seeing the increase of wealth in his house (tatra), seeing that he now possessed more wealth than the palace of Indra, he thought, "How has the wealth appeared? Where has this come from?"

Text 81.33

nūnaṁ bataitan mama durbhagasya
śaśvad daridrasya samṛddhi-hetuḥ
mahā-vibhūter avalokato 'nyo
naivopapadyeta yadūttamasya

[Sudāmā thought:] I have always been poor. Certainly the only possible way that such an unfortunate person as myself could become suddenly rich is that Kṛṣṇa, the supremely wealthy chief of the Yadu dynasty, has glanced upon me.

COMMENTARY: Nūnam expresses certainly and bata expresses joy. This has arisen because of the glance of Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise (anyat) there is no cause of my wealth, since I am unfortunate and always poor. Instead of anyat sometimes anyaḥ is seen. And Kṛṣṇa is always filled with his complete śakti in the form of Lakṣmī (mahā-vibhūteḥ).

Text 81.34

nanv abruvāṇo diśate samakṣaṁ
yāciṣṇave bhūry api bhūri-bhojaḥ
parjanya-vat tat svayam īkṣamāṇo
dāśārhakāṇām ṛṣabhaḥ sakhā me

After all, my friend Kṛṣṇa, the most exalted of the Dāśārhas and the enjoyer of unlimited wealth, noticed that I secretly intended to beg from him. Thus, even though he said nothing about it when I stood before him, he actually bestowed upon me the most abundant riches. In this way he acted just like a merciful rain cloud.

COMMENTARY: The best of the Dāśārhas is my friend. Without saying anything, he gave to me wealth like Vaikuṇṭha, without my knowing, though I concealed that I was begging. How did he know that I wanted to ask, though I said nothing? He personally sees, since he is the crown jewel of omniscience. He gave abundantly (bhūri) because he is embarrassed to give a little (bhūri-bhojaḥ). This is the reason he gave without saying anything, invisibly. This was in response to my not overtly begging. By his nature he gives unconditionally. This is seen elsewhere also. He is like a cloud. Sometimes without request, when people are sleeping, the cloud without thunder showers rain. On thinking of this quality of the Lord, Sudāmā felt intense love, and thus called him the best of the Dāśārhas. Out of intense bliss he says “He is my friend.”

Text 81.35

kiñcit karoty urv api yat sva-dattaṁ
suhṛt-kṛtaṁ phalgv api bhūri-kārī
mayopaṇītaṁ pṛthukaika-muṣṭiṁ
pratyagrahīt prīti-yuto mahātmā

The Lord considers even his greatest benedictions to be insignificant, while he magnifies even a small service rendered to him by his well-wishing devotee. Thus, with pleasure the Supreme Soul accepted a single palmful of the flat rice I brought him.

COMMENTARY: One should not think that one must give so much. Even if the devotee does little, the Lord considers that great. What I offered is the main proof. He responded in this way because he is most worthy of worship (mahā) and is compassionate (ātmā). Thinking of his insignificant offering, he became ashamed.

Text 81.36

tasyaiva me sauhṛda-sakhya-maitrī-
dāsyaṁ punar janmani janmani syāt
mahānubhāvena guṇālayena
viṣajjatas tat-puruṣa-prasaṅgaḥ

Life after life may I attain friendship and service to him and may he be my companion and intimate. May I attain association with his devotees, since he is the reservoir of all qualities and powers.

COMMENTARY: Since he responds in this way, may he be my friend life after life. Because of his relationship with me, he chewed that tasteless rice as if it were delicious. May I be his friend and servant (suhṛda, dāsyam). May he be my companion (sakha) and intimate (maitrī). May I have prema for him and service to him. And may he assist me as a friend, giving me benefit. May he do this even if I take birth repeatedly (punaḥ). Or punaḥ can mean "but." I may take birth somewhere, but may I be his friend. Sauhṛda can also mean helpful concerning bodily activities. Sakhya can mean faith. Maitrī can mean affection. Dāsyam can mean humility. Or sauhṛda can mean unconditional, mutual rendering of benefit. Sakhya can mean love while playing as a companion. Maitrī can mean affection and dāsyam can mean doing service. Punaḥ can be taken as an ornament (no meaning).

Someone may say, “The phrase tasya eva (with him only) excludes Sudāmā’s friendship with his devotees.” That is not so. Attaining contact with friendship, companionship, etc., by the Lord’s great powers (mahānubhavena) and his reservoir of qualities like form, youthfulness, compassion and affection, I will have association in prema (prasaṅgaḥ) with his devotees and friends. This is because of his power and his qualities.

Text 81.37

bhaktāya citrā bhagavān hi sampado
rājyaṁ vibhūtīr na samarthayaty ajaḥ
adīrgha-bodhāya vicakṣaṇaḥ svayaṁ
paśyan nipātaṁ dhanināṁ madodbhavam

To a devotee who lacks spiritual insight, the Supreme Lord will not grant the wonderful powers of this world—kingly power and material assets. In his infinite wisdom the unborn Lord knows how the intoxication of pride can cause the downfall of the wealthy.

COMMENTARY: Since the Lord is full of all powers (bhagavān) and is always perfect in himself (ajaḥ), he is independent in bestowing benedictions. He does not give wealth, kingdom and power, because of the variety of mentalities (citrā) in the devotees. The Lord sees that intoxication with wealth, kingdom and power cause downfall from one’s position or makes one fall from one’s dharma to hell, since the Lord is omniscient (vicakṣaṇaḥ). “Then why did he give to Dhruva, Prahlāda and Ambarīṣa?” They had good intelligence. They had good qualities because of the strength of their intelligence. But the Lord does not give to those with meager intelligence because he sees it will create obstacles for them to attain him.

Text 81.38

itthaṁ vyavasito buddhyā bhakto ’tīva janārdane
viṣayān jāyayā tyakṣyan bubhuje nāti-lampaṭaḥ

Thus firmly fixing his determination by means of his spiritual intelligence, Sudāmā remained absolutely devoted to Kṛṣṇa. Free from attachment to

enjoyment, he enjoyed, together with his wife, while giving up the sense objects.

COMMENTARY: By careful consideration (buddhyā) he was fixed in determination to Kṛṣṇa, who was most affectionate to the devotees, who asked (ardana) his devotee (jana), "What have you brought me?" The devotee with intense (atīva) love for the Lord, one having prema, enjoyed in order to please his wife while giving up sense objects. Doing otherwise would be a fault in dharma. He enjoyed while being unattached to those objects (nāti-lampataḥ).

Text 81.39

tasya vai deva-devasya harer yajña-pateḥ prabhoḥ
brāhmaṇāḥ prabhavo daivaṁ na tebhyo vidyate param

Kṛṣṇa, worshipped by all the devatās, the giver of results of all sacrifices, and the supreme ruler, accepts brāhmaṇas as his masters. For him there exists no deity higher than them.

COMMENTARY: It is not surprising that Kṛṣṇa is affectionate to brāhmaṇas since he is Svayam Bhagavān. That is illustrated in this verse. Or, having spoken of the Kṛṣṇa's great quality of having affection for brāhmaṇas, the particular qualities of Bhagavān are now detailed in this verse. He is to be worshipped by Brahmā and others (devadevasya). He gives the results to the brāhmaṇas and other executors of sacrifice (yajña-pateḥ). He is the controller of the universe (prabhoḥ). Successively these terms indicate more and more Kṛṣṇa's suitability to serve the brāhmaṇas. That he serves them (prabhāvaḥ) is famous (vai). It is not surprising. No other deity than they exist for him. He worships them with devotion. It is impossible to worship other deities since he is attractive to all (hareḥ).

Text 81.40

evaṁ sa vipro bhagavat-suhṛt tadā
dṛṣṭvā sva-bhṛtyair ajitaṁ parājitam
tad-dhyāna-vegodgrathitātma-bandhanas
tad-dhāma lebhe 'cirataḥ satāṁ gatim

Thus seeing how the unconquerable Supreme Lord is nonetheless conquered by his own servants, the Lord's dear brāhmaṇa friend felt the remaining knots of material attachment within his heart being cut by the force of his constant meditation on the Lord. In a short time he attained Lord Kṛṣṇa's supreme abode, the destination of great saints.

COMMENTARY: The brāhmaṇa concluded that the unconquerable Lord is conquered by his servants. He thought of him with devotion, as the Lord who is controlled by his devotee. By continuous thoughts (dhyāna-vega) in prema, he untied the knots of bondage on the ātmā, consisting of his consciousness of being a brāhmaṇa. He quickly attained Dvārakā. All that was not surprising for him, since he was the friend of the Lord (bhagavat-suhṛt).

Text 81.41

etad brahmaṇya-devasya śrutvā brahmaṇyatāṁ naraḥ
labdha-bhāvo bhagavati karma-bandhād vimucyate

The Lord always shows brāhmaṇas special favor. Anyone who hears this account of the Supreme Lord's kindness to brāhmaṇas will come to develop love for the Lord and thus become freed from the bondage of material work.

COMMENTARY: One should not think it astonishing that the brāhmaṇa quickly achieved the Lord's abode. One can achieve that abode even by hearing the story about it. If any human (naraḥ)—without qualification—hears the story of the Lord's kindness to the brāhmaṇa, what to speak of hearing of his friend and his embraces, he attains prema for Kṛṣṇa. In that state, he is freed from the bondage of karma completely (vi-mucyate). He will automatically be free of prārabdha-karmas. This means that, performing bhakti happily by his free will, he attains the Lord's abode. Or hearing of Kṛṣṇa's (brāhmaṇya-devasya) affection for the brāhmaṇa, one attains prema for the Lord who reveals all powers (bhavagati).

Chapter Eighty-two
The Lord Blesses Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa

Text 82.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
athaikadā dvāravatyāṁ vasato rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ
sūryoparāgaḥ su-mahān āsīt kalpa-kṣaye yathā

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, while Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were living in Dvārakā, there occurred a great eclipse of the sun, just as if the end of Lord Brahmā's day had come.

COMMENTARY: A new topic is introduced (atha). Or the event took place after Śrīdāmā went to Dvārakā. This happened some time before the Rājasūya sacrifice. After leaving Mathurā and while residing in Dvārakā for some time, after Balarāma had visited Vraja, there was a solar eclipse, which lasted a long time (sumahān), like the end of Brahmā's day.

Text 82.2

taṁ jñātvā manujā rājan purastād eva sarvataḥ
samanta-pañcakaṁ kṣetraṁ yayuḥ śreyo-vidhitsayā

Knowing of this eclipse in advance, O King, many people went to the holy place known as Samanta-pañcaka in order to earn pious credit.

COMMENTARY: O King! Śukadeva calls Parīkṣit's attention to this topic, since he is still absorbed in the previous story. This topic has a rasa superior to that of even the last topic. They went with a desire to bathe, give charity and to perform other pious acts.

Text 82.3–6

niḥkṣatriyāṁ mahīṁ kurvan rāmaḥ śastra-bhṛtāṁ varaḥ
nṛpāṇāṁ rudhiraugheṇa yatra cakre mahā-hradān
īje ca bhagavān rāmo yatrāspṛṣṭo 'pi karmaṇā
lokaṁ saṅgrāhayann īśo yathānyo 'ghāpanuttaye
mahatyāṁ tīrtha-yātrāyāṁ tatrāgan bhāratīḥ prajāḥ

vṛṣṇayaś ca tathākrūra-vasudevāhukādayaḥ
yayur bhārata tat kṣetraṁ svam aghaṁ kṣapayiṣṇavaḥ
gada-pradyumna-sāmbādyāḥ sucandra-śuka-sāraṇaiḥ
āste 'niruddho rakṣāyāṁ kṛtavarmā ca yūtha-paḥ

After ridding the earth of kings, Paraśurāma, the foremost of warriors, created huge lakes from the kings' blood at Samantaka-pañcaka. Although he is never tainted by karmic reactions, Paraśurāma performed sacrifices there to instruct people in general; thus he acted like an ordinary person trying to free himself of sins. From all parts of Bhārata-varṣa a great number of people now came to that Samanta-pañcaka on pilgrimage. O descendant of Bharata, among those arriving at the holy place were many Vṛṣṇis, such as Gada, Pradyumna and Sāmba, hoping to be relieved of their sins; Akrūra, Vasudeva, Āhuka and other kings also went there. Aniruddha remained in Dvārakā with Sucandra, Śuka and Sāraṇa to guard the city, together with Kṛtavarmā, the commander of their armed forces.

COMMENTARY: The reason they went to Kurukṣetra is explained in two verses (3-4). It became sacred because of the influence of Paraśurāma. He made large lakes from the blood of the slain kṣatriyas. This place was called Samanta-pañcaka: the place in which five lakes (pañcaka) spread everywhere (samanta). To teach the people by instituting dharma, the Lord of all the worlds (īśaḥ) performed worship there. The place is praised because it would bring bliss to the people of Vraja on meeting Kṛṣṇa. Or two verses (3-4) describe this place because they went there on understanding the great results that could be achieved there. The vow would take place at the time of the eclipse. This pilgrimage was popular because of the occasion of the full eclipse (mahatyām). Almost all the people of Bhārata-varṣa came there. Among the population, the Yādavas are described first since they were accepted as the best. Vṛṣṇis means Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and others. Just as they came, Akrūra and others came. They are listed in this way because generally they did not come along with Kṛṣṇa. Akrūra is mentioned first, since he was highly respected for his actions. They all desired to be free of sin. For the Vṛṣṇis, destroying sins was a pastime, but for others it was real. Not only adults desiring purification came, but the younger members also came. "Who stayed to

protect Dvārakā?" They are mentioned last. Sucandra, also called Cārudeṣṇa, was the son of Rukmiṇī. Aniruddha also stayed to protect Dvārakā. Though the protective forces were light because Aniruddha was young, they still had great power because of the presence of strong warriors. The arrangement was suitable because of the presence of older persons. Or Aniruddha can here refer to one of the sons of Kṛṣṇa, rather than his grandson.

Text 82.7–8

te rathair deva-dhiṣṇyābhair hayaiś ca tarala-plavaiḥ
gajair nadadbhir abhrābhair nṛbhir vidyādhara-dyubhiḥ
vyarocanta mahā-tejāḥ pathi kāñcana-mālinaḥ
divya-srag-vastra-sannāhāḥ kalatraiḥ khe-carā iva

The mighty Yādavas passed with great majesty along the road. They were attended by their soldiers, who rode on chariots rivaling the airplanes of heaven, on horses moving with a rhythmic gait, and on bellowing elephants as huge as clouds. Also with them were many infantrymen as effulgent as celestial Vidyādharas. The Yādavas were so divinely dressed —being adorned with gold necklaces and flower garlands and wearing fine armor—that as they proceeded along the road with their wives, they seemed to be luminaries of the sky.

COMMENTARY: The Vṛṣṇis (te) shone with their chariots, etc. Nṛbhiḥ means "with foot soldiers." The four parts of the army were the chariots, horses, elephants and foot soldiers. They went with their wives. They were like planets in the sky because they were astonishing. Kṛṣṇa was like the moon.

Text 82.9

tatra snātvā mahā-bhāgā upoṣya su-samāhitāḥ
brāhmaṇebhyo dadur dhenūr vāsaḥ-srag-rukma-mālinīḥ

At Samanta-pañcaka, the saintly Yādavas bathed and then observed a fast with careful attention. Afterward they presented brāhmaṇas with cows bedecked with garments, flower garlands and gold necklaces.

COMMENTARY: At those lakes (tatra), they fasted because of the eclipse of the sun, not because of being in the tīrtha. Smṛti says muṇḍanaṁ

copavāsaś ca varjayitvā kurukṣetram: at Kurukṣetra one does not shave or fast.

Text 82.10

rāma-hradeṣu vidhi-vat punar āplutya vṛṣṇayaḥ
dadaḥ sv-annaṁ dvijāgryebhyaḥ kṛṣṇe no bhaktir astv iti

In accordance with scriptural injunctions, the descendants of Vṛṣṇi then bathed once more in Paraśurāma's lakes and fed first-class brāhmaṇas with sumptuous food. All the while, they prayed, "May we be granted devotion to Kṛṣṇa."

COMMENTARY: They fed brāhmaṇas the best rice. To express their great good fortune, in bathing and giving in charity, they prayed for devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Each prayed for prema for their families since they all had natural greed for the Lord.

Text 82.11

svayaṁ ca tad-anujñātā vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-devatāḥ
bhuktvopaviviśuḥ kāmaṁ snigdha-cchāyāṅghripāṅghriṣu

Then, with the permission of Kṛṣṇa, their sole object of worship, the Vṛṣṇis ate breakfast and sat down at their leisure beneath trees that gave cooling shade.

COMMENTARY: After describing activities on the day of the eclipse, now Śukadeva describes activities on the next day. They asked for permission to end the vrata and received it from Kṛṣṇa, since Kṛṣṇa was their object of worship.

Text 82.12–13

tatrāgatāṁs te dadṛśuḥ suhṛt-sambandhino nṛpān
matsyośīnara-kauśalya-vidarbha-kuru-sṛñjayān
kāmboja-kaikayān madrān kuntīn ānarta-keralān
anyāṁś caivātma-pakṣīyān parāṁś ca śataśo nṛpa
nandādīn suhṛdo gopān gopīś cotkaṇṭhitāś ciram

The Yādavas saw that many of the kings who had arrived were old friends and relatives—the Matsyas, Uśīnaras, Kauśalyas, Vidarbhas, Kurus,

Sṛñjayas, Kāmbojas, Kaikayas, Madras, Kuntīs and the kings of Ānarta and Kerala. They also saw many hundreds of other kings, both allies and adversaries. In addition, my dear King Parīkṣit, they saw their dear friends Nanda Mahārāja and the cowherd men and women, who had been suffering in anxiety for so long.

COMMENTARY: Some had come before the Vṛṣṇis and some had come after. Some they saw before the eclipse and some they saw after the eclipse. Uśīnara means people from Avantī. Kāmbhojas were from across the ocean. They also saw Nanda and others who had come there from Vraja. Previous to going to Dvārakā from Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa had said, "We desire to see our relatives." Having taken this opportunity as an excuse, they came with a great longing to see him. Thought the word suhṛd was mentioned in verse 12, it is again mentioned in relation to the people of Vraja since they were very special friends. The gopīs who were longing to see the Lord for a long time (utkaṇṭhitāś ciram) also came. Here and in Vraja they are described in this condition always. This shows their greatness. Śukadeva calls to Parīkṣit with intense bliss, "O King!"

Text 82.14

anyonya-sandarśana-harṣa-raṁhasā
protphulla-hṛd-vaktra-saroruha-śriyaḥ
āśliṣya gāḍhaṁ nayanaiḥ sravaj-jalā
hṛṣyat-tvaco ruddha-giro yayur mudam

As the great joy of seeing one another made the lotuses of their hearts and faces bloom with fresh beauty, the men embraced one another enthusiastically. With tears pouring from their eyes, the hair on their bodies standing on end and their voices choked up, they all felt intense bliss.

COMMENTARY: First, a general description of the happiness of all the male devotees meeting is given. Because of the power of joy on directly meeting each other, their hearts, hands, faces and forms became beautiful like fully blooming lotuses and they embraced each other firmly. They felt great joy. Their bliss was manifest in more and more intense degrees—first in tears, then in hairs standing on end and finally by choked voices.

Text 82.15

striyaś ca saṁvīkṣya mitho ’ti-sauhṛda-
smitāmalāpāṅga-dṛśo ’bhirebhire
stanaiḥ stanān kuṅkuma-paṅka-rūṣitān
nihatya dorbhiḥ praṇayāśru-locanāḥ

The women glanced at one another with pure smiles of loving friendship. And when they embraced, their breasts, smeared with saffron paste, pressed against one another as their eyes filled with tears of affection.

COMMENTARY: Now the women devotees are described. The word mutually (mithaḥ) should be understood with all the verbs. Because of the tight embraces they crushed each other (nihatya).

Text 82.16

tato ’bhivādya te vṛddhān yaviṣṭhair abhivāditāḥ
sv-āgataṁ kuśalaṁ pṛṣṭvā cakruḥ kṛṣṇa-kathā mithaḥ

They all then offered obeisances to their elders and received respect in turn from their younger relatives. After inquiring from one another about the comfort of their trip and their well-being, they proceeded to talk about Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: The general description of the meetings was given. Details are given in this verse. They offered respects to those who were older and received respects from those who were younger. They asked after each other’s health and mutually talked about Kṛṣṇa.

Text 82.17

pṛthā bhrātṝn svasṝr vīkṣya tat-putrān pitarāv api
bhrātṛ-patnīr mukundaṁ ca jahau saṅkathayā śucaḥ

Queen Kuntī met with her brothers and sisters and their children, and also with her parents, her brothers’ wives and Mukunda. While talking with them, she forgot her sorrow.

COMMENTARY: The relationship between Kuntī and Vasudeva is described in five verses (17-21). Brothers were Vasudeva and others. Sisters were Śrutadevī and others. Vasudeva’s sons were Balarāma, Gada, Santardana

and others. Parents were Śūra and his wife Bhojyā. Brothers' wives were Śrīdevī and others. Kuntī gave up the sorrow of not seeing them for so long. Or it can mean she shed tears (sucaḥ jahau).

Text 82.18

kunty uvāca
ārya bhrātar ahaṁ manye ātmānam akṛtāśiṣam
yad vā āpatsu mad-vārtāṁ nānusmaratha sattamāḥ

Queen Kuntī said: My dear, respectable brother, I feel that my desires have been frustrated, because although all of you are most saintly, you forgot me during my calamities.

COMMENTARY: She addresses Vasudeva since he is superior to others. O elder (ārya)! Since he is elder, he should have protected her. She addresses him as a brother to produce affection in him. Or ārya-bhrātar can be taken together. O elder brother! I am unfortunate since you did not remember me during my calamities though you are most respectable. Because of being respectable, he should have been affectionate to friends in a suffering condition.

Text 82.19

suhṛdo jñātayaḥ putrā bhrātaraḥ pitarāv api
nānusmaranti sva-janaṁ yasya daivam adakṣiṇam

Friends and family members—even children, brothers and parents—forget a dear one whom fate no longer favors.

COMMENTARY: Friends, family members, children, brothers and parents should remember a person with affection. The order is according to increasing affection.

Text 82.20

śrī-vasudeva uvāca
amba māsmān asūyethā daiva-krīḍanakān narān
īśasya hi vaśe lokaḥ kurute kāryate 'tha vā

Śrī Vasudeva said: Dear sister, please do not be angry with us—who are ordinary men, playthings of fate. Whether a person acts on his own or is

forced by others, he is always under the Supreme Lord's control.

COMMENTARY: O mother (amba)! He says this out of affection for her as a younger sister. Sometimes iśa-krīdāna-kātarān (men who suffer by the will of the Lord) is seen instead of daiva-krīḍanakam narān (men who are playthings of fate). As men (narān), we have little power compared to devatās and others.

We are not independent. Do not hate us, because (hi) all (atha) people who perform acts independently or have acts done to them by others are actually engaged in this under the control of the Supreme Lord. We are dependent. He makes people perform their actions in that particular way. Citsukha has roga-jarā-maraṇādi dharmiṇo vā (subject to sickness, old-age and death) in the first line.

Text 82.21

kaṁsa-pratāpitāḥ sarve vayaṁ yātā diśaṁ diśam
etarhy eva punaḥ sthānaṁ daivenāsāditāḥ svasaḥ

Harassed by Kaṁsa, we all fled in various directions, but by the grace of the Lord we have now finally been able to return to our homes, my dear sister.

COMMENTARY: From our young days we Yadus were afflicted by evil Kaṁsa's strength and later when he made allies with Keśī, Ariṣṭa, Tṛṇavarta, and Pūtanā we were more afflicted. But after Kaṁsa heard the message from the sky, he afflicted us even more. When my (Vasudeva's) sons starting with Kīrtman were born, he afflicted us even more. When Nārada spoke to Kaṁsa, the Yadus fled in all directions, but some were imprisoned. When I had Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma taken to Gokula, we were terrified of Kaṁsa's harassment. Later, we could not go to many places because of Jarāsandha's constant obstructions. We then came to Dvārakā. On understanding that you were burned in the house of lac, we began to grieve privately. But now, when your sons have obtained half of the Kuru kingdom (etarhi) by the favor of the Lord (daivena), we have obtained our homes with no disturbance to our families. O sister! This is known to you who desire to hear of our condition.

Text 82.22

śrī-śuka uvāca
vasudevograsenādyair yadubhis te 'rcitā nṛpāḥ
āsann acyuta-sandarśa-paramānanda-nirvṛtāḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Vasudeva, Ugrasena and the other Yadus honored the various kings, who became supremely blissful and content upon seeing Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: Though it was suitable that they honor each other, the Yadus honored all the kings since it was proper to respect them since they were the best kings. They were completely filled with bliss which was greater than realizing Brahman because of directly seeing Kṛṣṇa, who by his nature was full of all beauty (acyutasya).

Text 82.23–26

bhīṣmo droṇo 'mbikā-putro gāndhārī sa-sutā tathā
sa-dārāḥ pāṇḍavāḥ kuntī sañjayo viduraḥ kṛpaḥ
kuntībhojo virāṭaś ca bhīṣmako nagnajin mahān
purujid drupadaḥ śalyo dhṛṣṭaketuḥ sa kāśi-rāṭ
damaghoṣo viśālākṣo maithilo madra-kekayau
yudhāmanyuḥ suśarmā ca sa-sutā bāhlikādayaḥ
rājāno ye ca rājendra yudhiṣṭhiram anuvratāḥ
śrī-niketaṁ vapuḥ śaureḥ sa-strīkaṁ vīkṣya vismitāḥ

All the royalty present, including Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī and her sons, the Pāṇḍavas and their wives, Kuntī, Sañjaya, Vidura, Kṛpācārya, Kuntībhoja, Virāṭa, Bhīṣmaka, the great Nagnajit, Purujit, Drupada, Śalya, Dhṛṣṭaketu, Kāśirāja, Damaghoṣa, Viśālākṣa, Maithila, Madra, Kekaya, Yudhāmanyu, Suśarmā, Bāhlika with his associates and their sons, and the many other kings subservient to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira —all of them, O best of kings, along with their wives, were simply amazed to see the form of Kṛṣṇa, the abode of all opulence and beauty, standing before them.

COMMENTARY: The names of the kings are listed to show the excellence of Kṛṣṇa as the cause their experiencing great bliss. Ambikā putra indicates Dhṛtarāṣṭra's blindness (since Ambikā closed her eyes on seeing Vyāsa).

Gandharī's sons included Duryodhana. Tathā means "all." The wives of the Pāṇḍavas included Draupadī. Nagnajit is called great (mahān) because he gave his daughter to Kṛṣṇa. Thus he was considered the best among the kings. Purujit or Śaibya was the father of Mitrāvindā. The king of Kāśī was the brother of Sudakṣiṇa, or another person who lived with him out of great affection. Viśālākṣa-maithila means Bahulāśva or another king of that province. The word ādayaḥ indicates all their followers. Jarāsandha and Śiśupāla are not mentioned because they did not come, out of hatred, understanding that Kṛṣṇa was there. Those who were dedicated to Yudhiṣṭhira, along with their wives, were amazed at directly seeing (vi-īkṣya) Kṛṣṇa, the abode of all beauty (śrīniketam). This means that at this time Yudhiṣṭhira had obtained half of the kingdom. The wives were especially amazed because they were naturally soft with prema. Or the women and the men equally were amazed.

Text 82.27

atha te rāma-kṛṣṇābhyāṁ samyak prāpta-samarhaṇāḥ
praśaśaṁsur mudā yuktā vṛṣṇīn kṛṣṇa-parigrahān

After Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa had liberally honored them, with great joy and enthusiasm these kings began to praise the members of the Vṛṣṇi clan, Kṛṣṇa's personal associates.

COMMENTARY: After (atha) Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma personally honored them, the kings praised the Vṛṣṇis who had wealth or associates. Parigraha can mean wealth, associates, accepting and root.

Text 82.28

aho bhoja-pate yūyaṁ janma-bhājo nṛṇām iha
yat paśyathāsakṛt kṛṣṇaṁ durdarśam api yoginām

[The kings said:] O King of the Bhojas, you alone among men have achieved a truly exalted birth, for you continually behold Kṛṣṇa, who is rarely visible even to great yogīs.

COMMENTARY: The kings address Ugrasena since he was recognized as the leader, being the king of the Yadus, or because they treated him with respect as a king, equal to themselves. Aho indicates respect or

amazement. It is rare that yogīs like the Kumāras can see Kṛṣṇa directly even once, and only after great difficulties.

Text 82.29–30

yad-viśrutiḥ śruti-nutedam alaṁ punāti
pādāvanejana-payaś ca vacaś ca śāstram
bhūḥ kāla-bharjita-bhagāpi yad-aṅghri-padma-
sparśottha-śaktir abhivarṣati no 'khilārthān
tad-darśana-sparśanānupatha-prajalpa-
śayyāsanāśana-sayauna-sapiṇḍa-bandhaḥ
yeṣāṁ gṛhe niraya-vartmani vartatāṁ vaḥ
svargāpavarga-viramaḥ svayam āsa viṣṇuḥ

His fame, as broadcast by the Vedas, the water that has washed his feet, and the words he speaks in the form of the revealed scriptures—these thoroughly purify this universe. Although the earth's good fortune was ravaged by time, the touch of his lotus feet has revitalized her, and thus she is raining down on us the fulfillment of all our desires. The same Lord who pervades everything, who makes one forget the goals of heaven and liberation has now entered into marital and blood relationships with you, who otherwise travel on the hellish path of family life. Indeed, in these relationships you see and touch him directly, walk beside him, converse with him, and together with him lie down to rest, sit at ease and take your meals.

COMMENTARY: His fame, his foot water and his words (successively more powerful) purify the universe. Having stated ancient, standard glories of the Lord, they give particulars. The earth's good fortune was ravaged by Kali, which had entered at that time. Since Kṛṣṇa's feet are soft like the lotus, he should not touch the earth with his feet. But by the touch of his feet the earth has become most fortunate and developed the power of giving all things. It now showers us with all things continuously.

He is related to you through marriage or he is your relative. Otherwise you would go to hell. This is a statement made from the commoner's viewpoint. (The Vṛṣṇis never go to hell.) He has made you give up the taste for the happiness of Brahman realization and material enjoyment of Svarga by giving special happiness in seeing him without your having to endeavor.

Or he is related to you who are on the path of escape from saṁsāra (nirayam). He is directly pervading everything as Bhagavān (viṣṇuḥ).

Text 82.31

śrī-śuka uvāca
nandas tatra yadūn prāptān jñātvā kṛṣṇa-purogamān
tatrāgamad vṛto gopair anaḥ-sthārthair didṛkṣayā

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Nanda Mahārāja learned that the Yadus had arrived, led by Kṛṣṇa, he immediately went to see them. The cowherds accompanied him, their various possessions loaded on their wagons.

COMMENTARY: After describing the conversations between Kuntī and Vasudeva and others briefly in the beginning, there is now a detailed description of the Lord on his arrival meeting with Nanda and others who had arrived previous to the eclipse, since that was their main goal in going there, but had difficulty meeting him because of many reasons stated previously. The description continues until the end of the chapter. Understanding that the Yadus had arrived, along with all their families (prāptān), headed by Kṛṣṇa, his son, who attracts everyone's heart, Nanda came to Kurukṣetra, surrounded by Upananda and other cowherds, with their wives and others, in order to see him. Forget about others going for worldly or otherworldly benefits. They came there just with a desire to see Kṛṣṇa. This indicates their condition in separation from Kṛṣṇa. They came with carts loaded with goods or with articles dear to Kṛṣṇa, with his beloved gopīs sitting in carts.

Text 82.32

taṁ dṛṣṭvā vṛṣṇayo hṛṣṭās tanvaḥ prāṇam ivotthitāḥ
pariṣasvajire gāḍhaṁ cira-darśana-kātarāḥ

Seeing Nanda, the Vṛṣṇis were delighted and stood up like dead bodies coming back to life. Having felt much distress at not seeing him for so long, they held him in a tight embrace.

COMMENTARY: Seated in an assembly when Kṛṣṇa was not present, the Vṛṣṇis, joyful, stood up as if their hands, feet and other limbs had regained

their chief life air after fainting. In immediately standing up at the same time, they showed that they were all dependent for life upon Nanda. This act also showed Nanda's great qualities. They were overcome with seeing him after a long time. Or they were overjoyed in seeing him after a long time. Thus they embraced him intensely.

Text 82.33

vasudevaḥ pariṣvajya samprītaḥ prema-vihvalaḥ
smaran kaṁsa-kṛtān kleśān putra-nyāsaṁ ca gokule

Vasudeva embraced Nanda Mahārāja with great joy. Beside himself with ecstatic love, Vasudeva remembered the troubles Kaṁsa had caused him, forcing him to leave his sons in Gokula for their safety.

COMMENTARY: Having described the Vṛṣṇis' reaction in general, now Vasudeva's detailed reaction is described. More than the others, Vasudeva was completely overjoyed and then overcome with prema—with ecstatic symptoms like goose bumps and trembling. He remembered how Kaṁsa had imprisoned him and killed his other sons and how he had put his son or his two sons in Gokula. He remembered the previous incidents on seeing Nanda, because of recalling the great help Nanda had been in freeing him from suffering.

Text 82.34

kṛṣṇa-rāmau pariṣvajya pitarāv abhivādya ca
na kiñcanocatuḥ premṇā sāśru-kaṇṭhau kurūdvaha

O hero of the Kurus, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma embraced their parents and bowed down to them, but their throats were so choked up with tears of love that the two Lords could say nothing.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were with Vasudeva. Upananda and other cowherds were also there. Yaśodā's heart had almost stopped functioning and on the way, she had almost not eaten. Her face became filled with tears. She had to be held up by the arms by friends on either side. Hearing that she had come in a cloth-covered cart and was not far away, immediately Vasudeva along with intimate associates took her and Nanda inside his residence. This verse describes what happened when they

met Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma who had been called. Though Nanda and Yaśodā, coming from Vraja, met with Vasudeva and others who were seated in an outer room, and would have gone into an inner room where Devakī and other women were seated, which was proper behavior in front of many men, the descriptions of their meeting the men and women are made at once in order to show that both groups had equal prema for Nanda and Yaśodā and to make the description brief. One should understand that Devakī and Yaśodā also embraced and talked together. Kṛṣṇa who was attracted (kṛṣ means being attracted) to the great affection of his parents and Rāma who took pleasure (rāma means pleased) in the affection of his parents, simultaneously embraced their two parents.

Recovering after a long time, they then addressed them. On seeing their parents, they approached them, embraced them, and could not free themselves from their embrace, nor could their parents free themselves from the embrace. Somehow they managed to sit down but could not speak—Kṛṣṇa and Balarāṁa could not inquire about their health since tears blocked their throats, which happened because of prema. They were filled with affection for their parents and their parents were filled with affection for them. This should be understood in all the descriptions. It should also be understood that they trembled and their hairs stood on end. Kṛṣṇa is mentioned first because he desired to go first, out of his great attraction to their affection. Or out of great affection for him, Balarāma placed Kṛṣṇa in front of him. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma always regarded them as their parents (pitarau). Out of intense prema Śukadeva calls to Parīkṣit “O best of the Kurus!” Such nature and conduct are suitable for those coming in a great family of which you are a similar member.

Text 82.35

tāv ātmāsanam āropya bāhubhyāṁ parirabhya ca
yaśodā ca mahā-bhāgā sutau vijahatuḥ śucaḥ

Raising their two sons onto their seats and holding them in their arms, Nanda and fortunate mother Yaśodā forgot their sorrow.

COMMENTARY: Vasudeva, according to the rules for welcoming guests, and seeing that everyone might fall down because of being overcome with

affection at that time, made them all sit. Then their parents immediately put the two boys on the seats in which the parents sat. Śukadeva indicates that the name Yaśodā was suitable since she gave (dā) such good fortune (yaśo) to Śukadeva because he could describe her prema at this time. She herself was most fortunate (mahā-bhāgāḥ). Ca indicates Nanda. He also, most fortunate, was there. She however is specifically named to indicate her extreme affection. "How could the two parents place Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma on their seats without fear since the two showed such evident powers and were fully grown up?" They always regarded Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with affection as their sons (sutau). They could not give up their sons at all.

Text 82.36

rohiṇī devakī cātha pariṣvajya vrajeśvarīm
smarantyau tat-kṛtāṁ maitrīṁ bāṣpa-kaṇṭhyau samūcatuḥ

Then Rohiṇī and Devakī both embraced the Queen of Vraja, remembering the faithful friendship she had shown them. Their throats choking with tears, they addressed her as follows.

COMMENTARY: After Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had come and their parents had recovered somewhat, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma went outside with Nanda and Vasudeva to meet with thousands of other residents of Vraja. Then Rohiṇī and Devakī embraced Yaśodā. Rohiṇī is mentioned before Devakī because Devakī was delayed when Kṛṣṇa lost consciousness from bliss at the meeting and because Rohiṇī had a special affection for Yaśodā from living with Yaśodā in Vraja for a long time. Śukadeva calls Yaśodā the queen of Vraja out of his great bhāva, showing greater respect for her than the other two women there. Maitrīm means that she performed actions for their benefit.

Text 82.37

kā vismareta vāṁ maitrīm anivṛttāṁ vrajeśvari
avāpyāpy aindram aiśvaryaṁ yasyā neha pratikriyā

What woman could forget the unceasing friendship you and Nanda have shown us, dear Queen of Vraja? There is no way to repay you in this

world, even with the wealth of Indra.

COMMENTARY: Rohiṇī speaks. How could I not always remember the friendship of you two? "Why?" That friendship was unceasing. Though we left you and went away, you always served us by sending servants to take the news about our well being and always sending presents like ghee and milk gathered personally by you, even though you were far away and now, on the pretext of the pilgrimage, you have come here to see us. In this way your friendship is unceasing. She addressed Yaśodā as the queen of Vraja out of respect and prema. She indicated that the wealth of Indra is even greater than that of Dvārakā because of her forgetfulness. Though one can repay other friends, one cannot forget you since it is impossible to repay you.

Text 82.38

etāv adṛṣṭa-pitarau yuvayoḥ sma pitroḥ
samprīṇanābhyudaya-poṣaṇa-pālanāni
prāpyoṣatur bhavati pakṣma ha yadvad akṣṇor
nyastāv akutra ca bhayau na satāṁ paraḥ svaḥ

Before these two boys had ever seen their real parents, you acted as their parents and gave them all affectionate care, training, nourishment and protection. They were never afraid, good lady, because you protected them just as eyelids protect the eyes. Saintly persons like you never discriminate between outsiders and their own kin.

COMMENTARY: Devakī speaks this verse. The two boys had not seen their real parents, what to speak of the experience of being cared for by them. The parents only gave birth to them. It is well known (sma) that you became their parents since you satisfied them by giving things that greatly pleased them (samprīṇana), created auspiciousness for them by doing saṁskāras or by making them grow (abhyudaya), nourished them with milk from your breast (poṣaṇa) and protected them by having them rest. Sometimes lālana is seen instead of poṣana. You were able to do these actions for them in the most excellent way (pra-āpya). "This is fine, since she thought that Kṛṣṇa was her own child, but what about Balarāma, whom she knew to be Rohiṇī's child?" Elevated people do not think of "mine" and "others." This was Devakī's meaning of the words. She thought,

“Yaśodā knows very well that Kṛṣṇa is my son. Therefore such consolation is proper.”

But Yaśodā was unaware of anything else because of relishing strong impressions of Kṛṣṇa as her son. She only remembered Kṛṣṇa with great intensity with his promise, “I will come to see my relatives after giving happiness to friends in Mathurā.” (SB 10.45.23) Thus, to her, there was another meaning to Devakī’s words. The two boys were offered by you two parents (Nanda and Yaśodā) to us Yadus. You experienced their birth which gives happiness to all beings and protected and cared for them, like the eyelid protects the eye, and then, after having lived with you, they accepted to live with us, without seeing their parents. But there should be no difference. “Why would she say this?” Still, for the elevated, there is no difference between what is one’s own and belongs to others. Or, for the elevated, there is no difference between those who are not parents (paraḥ) those who are parents (svaḥ). Since even Balarāma was born in her house the birth of both is referred to in the discussion.

Text 82.39

śrī-śuka uvāca
gopyaś ca kṛṣṇam upalabhya cirād abhīṣṭaṁ
yat-prekṣaṇe dṛśiṣu pakṣma-kṛtaṁ śapanti
dṛgbhir hṛdī-kṛtam alaṁ parirabhya sarvās
tad-bhāvam āpur api nitya-yujāṁ durāpam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While gazing at their beloved Kṛṣṇa, the young gopīs used to condemn the creator of their eyelids, [which would momentarily block their vision of him]. Now, seeing Kṛṣṇa again after such a long separation, with their eyes they took him into their hearts, and there they embraced him to their full satisfaction. In this way they became totally absorbed in ecstatic meditation on him, although those who constantly practice mystic yoga find such absorption difficult to achieve.

COMMENTARY: With either meaning, Yaśodā did not answer Devakī’s statement. Rather, because she was absorbed in seeing her son after a long time, she did not hear at all and said nothing at all. After she did not speak, Śukadeva spoke. The sage endowed with all knowledge (śrī), who knew the

bhāva of the gopīs and Kṛṣṇa, spoke. Thus one should firmly believe his words. It should of course be understood that even earlier, for a long time they were thin from experiencing separation from him and were burning up. Śukadeva now describes the arrival of the gopīs who had been brought to Kṛṣṇa's private quarters by Uddhava.

The word ca indicates "not only them but others, the gopīs, also." Or ca can mean "but." But more than the others, the gopīs now intimately attained (upa-labhya) Kṛṣṇa whom they desired to see for a long time with complete bhāva (abhi-iṣṭam). Or, they attained after a long period Kṛṣṇa who they held dearer than a thousand lives (abhīṣṭam). Their superior prema is then shown. They cursed the creator of eyelids for their eyes because they desired to glance at him without break (pra-īksaṇe). The plural is used in dṛśiṣu to indicate many gopīs with many eyes. Why did the creator not remove the eyelid from the eye? Or because of extreme thirst in prema the plural refers to all the glances. Why were eyelids made for seeing? The long vowel in hṛdī is for metrical reasons. They placed him in their hearts and there embraced him fully (alam), by their free will. All of them (sarvāḥ), though of many different types, filled with pain from long separation, became one with him (tad-bhāvam), forgetting themselves because of an appearance of his clear manifestation. This was rare even for perfected yogīs.

Or they had always kept him in their hearts but now they embraced him with their eyes (they gazed at him intensely with the greatest attachment). They then attained the highest limit of prema (tad-bhāvam). This means for a long time they fainted in bliss. This state was rarely attained even by Rukmiṇī and others who were constantly with him (nitya-yujām).

Text 82.40

bhagavāṁs tās tathā-bhūtā vivikta upasaṅgataḥ
āśliṣyānāmayaṁ pṛṣṭvā prahasann idam abravīt

The Supreme Lord approached the gopīs in a secluded place as they stood in their ecstatic trance. After embracing each of them and inquiring about their well-being, he laughed and spoke as follows.

COMMENTARY: Then, in order to appease them, he brought them to a special room. His personal consolation is described. Knowing everything (bhagavān), he closely associated with (upa-saṅgataḥ) the gopīs (tāḥ) who had attained an intolerable state of separation from him, at night, in a private place (vivikte). He simultaneously, by his special powers, embraced each gopī in order to bring them out of a fainting condition which they had entered because of intense prema. He consoled them since they were constantly weeping and fainting. Seeing that they quickly recovered, he asked about their health (anāmayam). Previously he had taught them a method of getting relief from separation through Uddhava. That method should not produce this effect. He asked about their general health in order to hide his own offense of not coming before this time. After some time had passed in pleasant talk, he started to smile (pra-hasan) to reduce their lamentation and then spoke some most astonishing words (idam).

Text 82.41

api smaratha naḥ sakhyaḥ svānām artha-cikīrṣayā
gatāṁś cirāyitāñ chatru-pakṣa-kṣapaṇa-cetasaḥ

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear girīfriends, do you still remember me? It was for my relatives' sake that I stayed away so long, intent on destroying my enemies.

COMMENTARY: O friends do you not remember me (api)? The plural verb is used to indicate many gopīs. Thus he indicates that it was not possible to come quickly by his will alone, even by accepting many forms. O friends! I am fit to be remembered by you. With this he pacifies them. He asks them to forgive his fault. "We do not think you are fit to be remembered because of your great offense." Ignoring you, I went away with a desire to perform an act (artha)—to kill Kaṁsa—for my relatives such as Vasudeva, since he is the brother of Nanda. That stay extended for a long time because I desired to destroy Kaṁsa's allies. To help the Yādavas and others, I became known as Vasudeva's son and had a semblance of marriages.

Text 82.42

apy avadhyāyathāsmān svid akṛta-jñāviśaṅkayā
nūnaṁ bhūtāni bhagavān yunakti viyunakti ca

Do you perhaps think I'm ungrateful and thus hold me in contempt? After all, it is the Supreme Lord who brings living beings together and then separates them.

COMMENTARY: It is not possible to remember me by my good qualities, since I am devoid of qualities like gratitude. But you can remember me by my faults! In order to express this, he speaks to have them forgive his offense. Perhaps (api) you think badly of me, fearing completely (ā) and specifically (vi-śaṅkayā) that I am ungrateful. Or perhaps you think badly of me, having decided that I am ungrateful (aviśaṅkayā). Controlled by prema, bewildered, not making use of his powers, acting according to the saying lokavat līlā-kaivalyam (he performs his pastimes like an ordinary human), not seeing an answer to their accusations, he then consoled them by methods of jñāna: for certain (nūnam) the Lord brings together and separates all beings.

Text 82.43

vāyur yathā ghanānīkaṁ tṛṇaṁ tūlaṁ rajāṁsi ca
saṁyojyākṣipate bhūyas tathā bhūtāni bhūta-kṛt

Just as the wind brings together masses of clouds, blades of grass, wisps of cotton and particles of dust, only to scatter them all again, so the creator deals with his created beings in the same way.

COMMENTARY: "That means the Lord is pitiless and unjust." Just as clouds and other objects move by the whim of the wind, which is natural to it, not with some purpose, the Lord (bhūta-kṛt) also deals similarly with all beings.

Text 82.44

mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām amṛtatvāya kalpate
diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho bhavatīnāṁ mad-āpanaḥ

Bhakti to me qualifies any living being for eternal life. But your prema for me, which has existed to bring the highest fortune, has caused you to attain me directly.

COMMENTARY: "Even they have knowledge of my famous powers." Thinking of this for a moment, taking support of that, he consoled them appropriately. If I am the Lord, though absorbed in my pastime of killing

the enemies, I would not have the power to separate myself from you, being controlled by affection for you. Bhakti to me, even one out of the nine processes (hi), or affection for me, qualifies all beings for liberation. You are most worthy of worship (bhavatīnām). Your perfection of prema (snehaḥ), causing both our bhāvas to melt, has caused you to attain me directly. It has strongly pulled you to me. That prema which existed in union and separation is most fortunate, since it makes separation no longer possible.

Text 82.45

ahaṁ hi sarva-bhūtānām ādir anto 'ntaraṁ bahiḥ
bhautikānāṁ yathā khaṁ vār bhūr vāyur jyotir aṅganāḥ

Dear ladies, I am the beginning and end of all created beings and exist both within and without them, just as the elements ether, water, earth, air and fire are the beginning and end of all material objects and exist both within and without them.

COMMENTARY: "But why is prema the cause of attaining you?" Because I am the shelter of everything, I alone am suitable for prema, and prema is suitable to attain me. Two verses (45-46) explain this. This means that very quickly you will attain me eternally. Or the gopīs may ask, "Why is there such long separation like this?" Then two verses (45-46) explain. There is a similar statement in the Dāmodara pastimes. Na cāntar na bahir yasya: the Supreme Lord has no beginning and no end. (SB 10.9.12) Certainly endowed with my beautiful form, I am the cause (ādi) and the place of dissolution (antaḥ). I am spread in the middle (antaram). I spread throughout you, and remain there. Actually separation does not exist. O beautiful women! He shows his prema for them by noting their beauty and qualities.

Text 82.46

evaṁ hy etāni bhūtāni bhūteṣv ātmātmanā tataḥ
ubhayaṁ mayy atha pare paśyatābhātam akṣare

In this way the basic elements of creation pervade the bodies, while the spirit souls pervade their bodies. You should see both of these—the

material body and the self—as manifest within me, the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY: Certainly in the way mentioned (my being the beginning and end of all things), the five gross elements exist in the body. The ātmā spreads by its śakti in the bodies (tataḥ) by itself (ātmanā) and exists in them. Both the body and the ātmā exist in me since I am the Supreme Lord (pare), since I am the sole support for the universe. Therefore realize that the body and ātmā both exist (ābhāntam) in me, the Supreme Lord, who exists always and everywhere.

One may object that this statement is completely different from the bhāva of the gopīs. Thus another meaning can be given, just as in Uddhava's message to the gopīs previously. Verse 45 can be explained as follows. Ahaṅkāra (aham) is the beginning and end of all elements. The elements are all included in ahaṅkāra. Verse 46 means the following. The objects realized in the prakaṭa pastimes (etani bhūtāni), the objects of your possessiveness, purely spiritual objects such as Vṛndāvana, exist in the spiritual objects of the aprakaṭa pastimes (bhūteṣu). Eko viṣṇur mahad bhūtam pṛthag bhūtāny anekaśaḥ: Viṣṇu is the original cause of all causes: he is the chief living entity, eternally an individual different from all other living entities. (Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-stotra 140) Your identity in the prakaṭa pastimes (ātmā) is spread with your identity in the aprakaṭa pastimes. Realize the identity of objects and self in the prakaṭa and aprakaṭa pastimes (ubhayam) to be existing in me, the shelter of all things, with whom you associate eternally (akṣare), playing in Vṛndāvana, though I appear as part of this manifested world (pare).

Text 82.47

śrī-śuka uvāca
adhyātma-śikṣayā gopya evaṁ kṛṣṇena śikṣitāḥ
tad-anusmaraṇa-dhvasta-jīva-kośās tam adhyagan

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus been instructed by Kṛṣṇa in spiritual matters, the gopīs were freed of all tinges of false ego because of their incessant meditation upon him. And with their deepening absorption in him, they came to understand him fully.

COMMENTARY: The results of the teachings are described. Having accepted the instructions under the supervision of Kṛṣṇa, by constantly thinking of the meaning of what he taught, they destroyed the obstructions to their staying alive thoughts such as "We will not live." Consequently, they understood him. They understood that they would attain him. At first, they did not know him as the object which they could definitely attain.

The second meaning is as follows, by constant remembrance of his form which spreads everywhere, they developed intense prema: they realized him. By this they destroyed their (ātma) conviction that they could not attain him (kośa). They then understood that they would attain him (tam adhyagan).

The third meaning is as follows. By remembering his manifestation of his aprakaṭa pastimes, they destroyed the covering consisting of the prakaṭa pastimes which caused feelings of separation. These hidden meanings are accepted because of the suggestiveness of the figurative language (jīva-kośāḥ). Others will take the meaning to be "Understanding instructions about ātmā, they understood the ātmā."

Text 82.48

āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindaṁ
yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ
saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambaṁ
gehaṁ juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ

The gopīs spoke thus: Dear Lord, whose navel is just like a lotus flower, your lotus feet are the only shelter for those who have fallen into the deep well of material existence. Your feet are worshiped and meditated upon by great mystic yogīs and highly learned philosophers. We wish that these lotus feet may also be awakened within our hearts, although we are only ordinary persons engaged in household affairs.

COMMENTARY: Understanding that they would attain him by his words, by taking the meaning of his teachings on ātmā-jñāna as an example or as esoteric communication (parokṣāvāda) they became most satisfied. Yet still they prayed to him with intense ardor. They indicate his supreme beauty by describing his lotus navel. O Lord with a lotus navel! Comparing his feet to

lotuses suggests that his feet produce the sweetest rasa and destroy suffering. Those feet are the best object of meditation (vi-cintyam) in the hearts for those who have mastered bhakti-yoga (yogeśvaraiḥ). They are considered the highest human goal by jñānīs, even by liberated ones. They are the means of deliverance for those who have fallen in saṁsāra—the materialists. Thus those feet are the served by bhaktas, muktas and materialists (viṣayīs) as the means and as the goal. May those feet manifest even once in the house of us gopīs who serve those feet constantly in our minds.

Or, by first calling out to him "O Lord with a lotus navel" they indicate to this special person the intolerable and unacceptable situation of separation up to this time. Being most unfortunate, let us forget about even a trace of news concerning seeing you, O Lord with the lotus navel! May your lotus feet appear in our minds by the remembrance of your instructions. But this seems impossible. Those feet should be the object of meditation for the masters of yoga, nor for us, since we faint on beginning to remember those feet. They expand on this. Those feet are the object of meditation for those whose intelligence is without agitation, even if they directly see those feet (agādha-bodhaiḥ), but not by us, since we become agitated and constantly faint just by desiring to see those feet. The Lord himself spoke to Uddhava:

mayi tāḥ preyasāṁ preṣṭhe dūra-sthe gokula-striyaḥ
smarantyo ʼṅga vimuhyanti virahautkaṇṭhya-vihvalāḥ

My dear Uddhava, for those women of Gokula I am the most cherished object of love. Thus when they remember me, who am so far away, they are overwhelmed by the anxiety of separation. SB 10.46.5

By comparing his feet to lotuses, they suggest that by touching his feet they can be relieved of suffering. But simply remembering those feet will not give relief. "But just as meditation by yogīs destroys the suffering of saṁsāra, it will destroy your suffering of separation. Therefore you should put those feet in your minds." Though those feet deliver persons who have fallen in saṁsāra, they will not deliver us, who have drowned in the ocean of separation. By thinking of your feet, we will experience an increase in suffering. "Having come here, you can constantly experience me directly." We live in others' houses and are not independent (geham juṣām).

Or, that meeting should be in the place where you previously had pastimes with us, in Gokula, in our own homes, which we perceive as our natural homes, where our desires can be fulfilled, not in Dvārakā. They had great affection for him alone, with their special desires. Their sentiment is expressed in the following verse.

yaḥ kaumāra-haraḥ sa eva hi varas tā eva caitra-kṣapās
te conmīlita-mālatī-surabhayaḥ prauḍhāḥ kadambānilāḥ
sā caivāsmi tathāpi tatra surata-vyāpāra-līlā-vidhau
revā-rodhasi vetasī-taru-tale cetaḥ samutkaṇṭhate

That very personality who stole away my heart during my youth is now again my master. These are the same moonlit nights of the month of Caitra. The same fragrance of mālatī flowers is there, and the same sweet breezes are blowing from the kadamba forest. In our intimate relationship, I am also the same lover, yet still my mind is not happy here. I am eager to go back to that place on the bank of the Revā under the Vetasī tree. That is my desire. Padyāvalī

Therefore, they express distaste because they could not think of his feet in their minds and because he was not able to personally come to Vraja.

dhārayanty ati-kṛcchreṇa prāyaḥ prāṇān kathañcana
pratyāgamana-sandeśair ballavyo me mad-ātmikāḥ

Simply because I have promised to return to them, my fully devoted cowherd girlfriends struggle to maintain their lives somehow or other. SB 10.46.6

Since we have become lifeless because of you, only if you come to Vṛndāvana will we be free of suffering.

The cowherd boys like Śrīdāmā did not come since they did not feel separation after being instructed by Uddhava. They stayed in Gokula to protect the cows. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa meeting them at Kurukṣetra is not described.

Chapter Eighty-three
Draupadī Meets the Queens of Kṛṣṇa

Text 83.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
tathānugṛhya bhagavān gopīnāṁ sa gurur gatiḥ
yudhiṣṭhiram athāpṛcchat sarvāṁś ca suhṛdo 'vyayam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs' instructor and eternal goal, showed them his mercy. He then met with Yudhiṣṭhira and all his other relatives and inquired from them about their welfare.

COMMENTARY: Having summarized the conversation of the gopīs with Kṛṣṇa on their first day of the meeting, other dealings with them on other days are understood. He made them understand that just as he was the guru, he was their attainment. This was the essence of his instructions. Secondarily his conversations with Yudhiṣṭhira and others are praised. He gave the gopīs mercy according to their prayer (tathā) because he alone was their instructor and the goal whom they eternally possessed (gatiḥ).

After that (atha) he inquired from Yudhiṣṭhira, since their fate until that time had been unclear. It is understood that previous to this he had not asked them, what to speak of other persons. This description is given to show that Kṛṣṇa valued the gopīs most of all. He inquired about Yudhiṣṭhira's health free of injury (avyayam).

Text 83.2

ta evaṁ loka-nāthena paripṛṣṭāḥ su-sat-kṛtāḥ
pratyūcur hṛṣṭa-manasas tat-pādekṣā-hatāmhasaḥ

Feeling greatly honored, King Yudhiṣṭhira and the others, freed of all sinful reactions by seeing the feet of the Lord of the universe, gladly answered his inquiries.

COMMENTARY: In order, they were asked thoroughly by the Lord of all the worlds and honored nicely with various gifts. Then they became joyful in

mind by his merciful presence. All their sufferings were destroyed by seeing his lotus feet. Yudhiṣṭhira and others then spoke.

Text 83.3

kuto 'śivaṁ tvac-caraṇāmbujāsavaṁ
mahan-manasto mukha-niḥsṛtaṁ kvacit
pibanti ye karṇa-puṭair alaṁ prabho
dehaṁ-bhṛtāṁ deha-kṛd-asmṛti-cchidam

[Lord Kṛṣṇa's relatives said:] O master, how can misfortune arise for those who have even once freely drunk the nectar coming from your lotus feet? This intoxicating liquor pours into the drinking cups of their ears, having flowed from the minds of great devotees through their mouths. It destroys the embodied souls' forgetfulness of the creator of their bodily existence.

COMMENTARY: From where or from what cause can there be inauspiciousness for those you hear about you? At all times, everywhere, they have auspiciousness. Some profusely (alam) drink (hear about with pleasure) the sweetness (āsavam) of your lotus feet—the excellence of your pastimes, qualities and form with devotion using their ears. "How do they attain what is most rare?" That sweetness has flowed from the minds of great devotees through their mouths. It has appeared by means of the mouth with extreme fullness. The word āsavam indicates that the topics are naturally sweet. By its intoxicating effect, it makes one forget all suffering. The destruction of inauspiciousness is shown by kaimutya. It is proper to remember the creator of the body by directly seeing it. These topics destroy forgetfulness of you, the body's creator.

Or for those who have bodies which give various sufferings at all times, these topics destroy forgetfulness which causes the production of bodies (deha-kṛt). Those topics cause continual remembrance of the Lord. This is possible because of your power. O Lord endowed with all ability (prabho)! If there is no inauspiciousness for others who hear accidentally, now by your mercy we certainly have no inauspiciousness because we hear about you while you personally distribute that sweetness. We see you directly and you ask us questions. Since the Pāṇḍavas' previous unlimited

inauspiciousness was destroyed, how could it again appear? Thus they always experienced auspiciousness.

Text 83.4

hi tvātma dhāma-vidhutātma-kṛta-try-avasthām
ānanda-samplavam akhaṇḍam akuṇṭha-bodham
kālopasṛṣṭa-nigamāvana ātta-yoga-
māyākṛtiṁ paramahaṁsa-gatiṁ natāḥ sma

The radiance of your personal form dispels the threefold effects of material consciousness, and by your grace we become immersed in total happiness. Your knowledge is indivisible and unrestricted. By your yoga-māyā potency you have assumed this human form for protecting the Vedas, which had been threatened by time. We bow down to you, the final destination of perfect saints.

COMMENTARY: Ignoring all else we surrender to you. You have revealed your form by your yoga-māyā.

yan martya-līlaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā gṛhītam

Kṛṣṇa possesses that form suitable for human pastimes to show the full capacity of his yoga-māyā. SB 3.2.12

This is the supreme form, appearing like an ordinary human being, which cannot be understood by others. This form is understood by the paramahaṁsas. Another meaning can be understood by taking the phrase ātma-dhāma to mean pure svarūpa (brahman, the goal of the jñāna). This is modified by the four phrases. Thus the meaning is "We surrender to you, manifested by your yoga-māyā for protecting the Vedas, while giving up (hitvā) knowledge of your pure svarūpa (ātmā-dhāma)—which purifies people of the three states of the self (waking, sleeping and dreaming), which creates bliss and continuous, unrestricted knowledge, and which is the goal of the paramahaṁsas." Sma indicates accomplishment. Another version has smaḥ (we are). Then the meaning is "We worship you with determination at all times." Why? You are to be worshipped by paramahaṁsas. The reason is that in order to protect the Vedas destroyed by time, you possess a form which displays all pastimes of your svarūpa-

śakti (ātta-yoga-māyā) or you manifest (ātta) a form of cit-śakti whose nature is yoga-māyā.

Or we surrender to you, endowed with a form of cit-śakti, called yoga-māyā, after you gave up Goloka, your eternal abode of pastimes (ātma-dhāma), which destroys material consciousness, which has continuous bliss and knowledge, and which is realized by paramahaṁsas.

Text 83.5

śrī-ṛṣir uvāca
ity uttamaḥ-śloka-śikhā-maṇiṁ janeṣv
abhiṣṭuvatsv andhaka-kaurava-striyaḥ
sametya govinda-kathā mitho 'gṛnaṁs
tri-loka-gītāḥ śṛṇu varṇayāmi te

The great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: As Yudhiṣṭhira and the others were thus praising Lord Kṛṣṇa, the crest jewel of all sublimely glorified personalities, the women of the Andhaka and Kaurava clans met with one another and began discussing topics about Govinda that are sung throughout the three worlds. Please listen as I relate these to you.

COMMENTARY: Just as Yudhiṣṭhira and his people praised Kṛṣṇa, other people also praised him. Similarly, the wives of the Yādavas and Kauravas gathered together and spoke about Kṛṣṇa. I will tell you these words sung in the three worlds, words filled with mercy. Please listen with complete faith. In the various topics discussed by the women, Śukadeva describes the conversations of Rukmiṇī and other queens with Draupadī about their marriages to Kṛṣṇa, since Śukadeva had great respect for Draupadī because of her special bhāva and because she herself was the chief of those possessing great sweetness.

Text 83.6–7

śrī-draupady uvāca
he vaidarbhy acyuto bhadre he jāmbavati kauśale
he satyabhāme kālindi śaibye rohiṇi lakṣmaṇe
he kṛṣṇa-patnya etan no brūte vo bhagavān svayam
upayeme yathā lokam anukurvan sva-māyayā

Śrī Draupadī said: O Vaidarbhī, Bhadrā and Jāmbavatī, Satyā, Satyabhāmā and Kālindī, Mitravindā, Rohiṇī, Lakṣmaṇā and other wives of Kṛṣṇa, please tell me how the Supreme Lord Acyuta, imitating the ways of this world by his mystic power, came to marry each of you.

COMMENTARY: Drauāpadī asked with great curiosity about the marriages because of her friendship with the queens. Kṛṣṇa is called Acyuta because he never left the houses of any of them. Though I know you queens of the Lord are eternally so because you are forms of Lakṣmī, please describe how he married you, while imitating ordinary behavior, giving mercy (māyā) to all his devotees in his prakaṭa pastimes. She shows reverence and curiosity.

Though it was possible to address the queens in order of seniority, according to when they were married, she calls to them according to the sitting arrangement at that time. She also adds the word he in addressing the three chief queens with respect. Rohiṇī was the chief among the sixteen thousand one hundred queens. She is mentioned with the chief eight since she was equal to them. In answering her, the queens speak in order of the time of their marriages. Jāmbavatī was married to Kṛṣṇa before Satyabhāmā but when they speak Satyabhāmā speaks before her because of her special love for the Lord. Bhadrā and Mitravindā are reversed when speaking verses in Śrīdhara Svāmī's version. This is an error of the copier since it produces a contradiction to the previous descriptions of the marriage given in Chapter 58. In his commentary on Lakṣmaṇā's words in verse 17, Bhadrā's name should replace Mitravindā's.

Text 83.8

śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca
caidyāya mārpayitum udyata-kārmukeṣu
rājasv ajeya-bhaṭa-śekharitāṅghri-reṇuḥ
ninye mṛgendra iva bhāgam ajāvi-yūthāt
tac-chrī-niketa-caraṇo 'stu mamārcanāya

Śrī Rukmiṇī said: When all the kings held their bows at the ready to assure that I would be presented to Śiśupāla, he who puts the dust of his feet on the heads of invincible warriors took me from their midst, as a lion forcibly takes his prey from the midst of goats and sheep. May I always be allowed to worship those feet of Kṛṣṇa, the abode of Lakṣmī.

COMMENTARY: I offer respects to the consorts of Kṛṣṇa, whose bhāvas are sometimes understood and sometimes hard to understand. I can only proceed to explain the meaning of their words by his mercy.

Kṛṣṇa put the dust of his feet upon the heads of the invincible kings. Or, Kṛṣṇa put his foot dust on their heads to show his invincibility. He accepted me as his own very easily, since he was unconquerable. An example is given to show his great prowess. He was like a lion taking his share from the goats and sheep. Giving the details, to show his great compassion, she says that she was taken in that way, though she was unqualified. "You are Lakṣmī full of all wealth. Should you not be taken by the Lord?" His feet are the abode of Lakṣmī. By his mercy, may I take shelter in a similar manner. Let his feet be there, as the object of my worship. She prays in this way, indicating that she is not qualified to be his servant. How do I then deserve to be his wife? She prays only to be his servant, serving his lotus feet. Or he whose feet are the abode of Lakṣmī accepted me as his share. She speaks out of great devotion. The grammatical structure is similar to SB 11.5.34

Text 83.9

śrī-satyabhāmovāca
yo me sanābhi-vadha-tapta-hṛdā tatena
liptābhiśāpam apamārṣṭum upājahāra
jitvarkṣa-rājam atha ratnam adāt sa tena
bhītaḥ pitādiśata māṁ prabhave 'pi dattām

Śrī Satyabhāmā said: My father, his heart tormented by his brother's death, accused Kṛṣṇa of killing him. To remove the stain on his reputation, the Lord defeated the king of the bears and took back the Syamantaka jewel, which he then returned to my father. Fearing the consequences of his offense, my father offered me to the Lord, even though I had already been promised to others.

COMMENTARY: "That she was given because of fear is not proper." He gave me, though given to others, to the Supreme Lord (prabhave). Actually, everything belongs to him. It is proper to give everything to him. Giving to others is wrong. Or, my father gave me, promised but not given to others, to Kṛṣṇa out of fear of Kṛṣṇa so he could protect himself. Her father's

offense was removed. Because my father was insane with grief for his brother, he accused the Lord. This was not intentional.

The Lord who took the jewel to remove the accusation, the Lord to whom my father gave me, gave the jewel back to my father. This verse has a grammatical construction similar to the last verse. Or, my father gave me to the Lord who took the jewel and gave it to my father. Like Rukmiṇī who prays to be a servant, most of the queens had prominent dāsya attitude, but Satyabhāmā had prominent sakhya because of strong feelings as a lover.

Text 83.10

śrī-jāmbavaty uvāca
prājñāya deha-kṛd amuṁ nija-nātha-daivaṁ
sītā-patiṁ tri-navahāny amunābhyayudhyat
jñātvā parīkṣita upāharad arhaṇaṁ māṁ
pādau pragṛhya maṇināham amuṣya dāsī

Śrī Jāmbavatī said: Unaware that Kṛṣṇa was none other than his own master and worshipable Deity, the husband of Goddess Sītā, my father fought with him for twenty-seven days. When my father finally came to his senses and recognized the Lord, he took hold of his feet and presented him with both me and the Syamantaka jewel as tokens of his reverence. I am simply the Lord's maidservant.

COMMENTARY: My actual father (deha-kṛt) did not at all know (prājñāya) that Kṛṣṇa was the Lord because he was intent on fighting. In order to negate the impossibility that a bear was her father, he had taken a suitable form at will, since he was the son of a devatā. My father did not know that Kṛṣṇa was also the husband of Sītā. In order to deliver Sītā, Rāma did special service because of her excellent bhakti. Or Rāma illustrates the affection of the Lord for his devotee. Previously it was said they fought for twenty-eight days. Here it says twenty-seven days. In this case the last day is not counted.

The Lord looked at him with mercy (pari-īkṣitaḥ) on all his limbs, touching him with his hands.

Abhimṛśyāravindākṣaḥ pāṇinā śaṁ-kareṇa tam: Kṛṣṇa touched Jāmbavān with his hand, which bestows all blessings. (SB 10.56.30)

Text 83.11

śrī-kālindy uvāca
tapaś carantīm ājñāya sva-pāda-sparśanāśayā
sakhyopetyāgrahīt pāṇiṁ yo 'haṁ tad-gṛha-mārjanī

Śrī Kālindī said: The Lord knew I was performing severe austerities and penances with the hope of one day touching his lotus feet. So he came to me in the company of his friend and took my hand in marriage. Now I am engaged as a sweeper in his palace.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa came with his friend Arjuna (sakhyā).

Text 83.12

śrī-mitravindovāca
yo māṁ svayaṁ-vara upetya vijitya bhū-pān
ninye śva-yūtha-gaṁ ivātma-baliṁ dvipāriḥ
bhrātṛṁś ca me 'pakurutaḥ sva-puraṁ śriyaukas
tasyāstu me 'nu-bhavam aṅghry-avanejanatvam

Śrī Mitravindā said: At my svayaṁ-vara ceremony he came forward, defeated all the kings present—including my brothers, who dared insult him—and took me away just as a lion removes his prey from amidst a pack of dogs. Thus Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of the goddess of fortune, brought me to his capital city. May I be allowed to serve him by washing his feet, life after life.

COMMENTARY: In place of Mitravindā, Bhadṛā is described here in Śrīdhara Svāmī's version. In the Madhva line also, this verse occurs here. There were actually two brothers Vinda and Anuvinda but here many brothers are mentioned. But the meaning is the same. Śriyaukaḥ instead of śriyah okaḥ (abode Lakṣmī) is poetic license. It indicates Kṛṣṇa or can modify "his city."

Text 83.13–14

śrī-satyovāca
saptokṣaṇo 'ti-bala-vīrya-su-tīkṣṇa-śṛṅgān

pitrā kṛtān kṣitipa-vīrya-parīkṣaṇāya
tān vīra-durmada-hanas tarasā nigṛhya
krīḍan babandha ha yathā śiśavo 'ja-tokān
ya itthaṁ vīrya-śulkāṁ māṁ
dāsībhiś catur-angiṇīm
pathi nirjitya rājanyān
ninye tad-dāsyam astu me

Śrī Satyā said: My father arranged for seven extremely powerful and vigorous bulls with deadly sharp horns to test the prowess of the kings who desired my hand in marriage. Although these bulls destroyed the false pride of many heroes, Kṛṣṇa subdued them effortlessly, tying them up in the same way that children playfully tie up a goat's kids. He thus purchased me with his valor. Then he took me away with my maidservants and a full army of four divisions, defeating all the kings who opposed him along the road. May I be granted the privilege of serving that Lord.

COMMENTARY: Ukṣaṇaḥ (bulls) should be ukṣṇaḥ. Though it is said her father wanted to test the strength of kings actually he arranged the test in order to give his daughter to Kṛṣṇa. This has been stated previously. Babandha ha means "he tied up all the bulls immediately." He did this as play, just as children tie up baby goats. The plural is used (children) since he expanded himself in seven forms to tie up seven bulls. Kṛṣṇa paid the price of valor in that he observed the conditions for marriage made by her father.

Text 83.15–16

śrī-bhadrovāca
pitā me mātuleyāya svayam āhūya dattavān
kṛṣṇe kṛṣṇāya tac-cittām akṣauhiṇyā sakhī-janaiḥ
asya me pāda-saṁsparśo bhavej janmani janmani
karmabhir bhrāmyamāṇāyā yena tac chreya ātmanaḥ

Śrī Bhadrā said: My dear Draupadī, of his own free will my father invited his nephew Kṛṣṇa, to whom I had already dedicated my heart, and offered me to him as his bride. My father presented me to the Lord with an akṣauhiṇi military guard and a retinue of my female companions. My

ultimate perfection is this: to always be allowed to touch Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet as I wander from life to life, bound by my karma.

COMMENTARY: Mitravindā speaks here instead of Bhadrā in Śrīdhara Svāmī's version. Though she was offered by her brothers as stated previously, here she says her father gave her. She was promised by her brothers. With everyone's consent, my father personally called Kṛṣṇa and gave me to him since I had given my heart to him, since Kṛṣṇa attracts everyone's heart (kṛṣṇāya). She mentioned the name of her husband directly (though this is normally not done) because on remembering him and their good fortune, she and the other queens became overcome with unmāda. Because of this they speak without reservation. Or they speak his name with pride. In the material world it is a fault to say the husband's name without any descriptive terms since it shows disrespect by making him appear insignificant. To say the name of the Lord however is not a fault but a good quality, since it indicates the Lord's greatness. Therefore saying the Lord's names directly is a show of respect. Śruti says yasya nāma mahad yaśaḥ: the Lord's name is full of great qualities. (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad) May I be able to touch his feet, by massaging them and other services, as I wander about by karmas birth after birth. As part of the human pastimes she shows indifference to all other human goals.

Text 83.17

śrī-lakṣmaṇovāca
mamāpi rājñy acyuta-janma-karma
śrutvā muhur nārada-gītam āsa ha
cittaṁ mukunde kila padma-hastayā
vṛtaḥ su-sammṛśya vihāya loka-pān

Śrī Lakṣmaṇā said: O Queen, I repeatedly heard Nārada Muni glorify the appearances and activities of Acyuta, and thus my heart also became attached to that Lord, Mukunda. Even Lakṣmī chose him as her husband after careful consideration, rejecting the great devatās who rule various planets.

COMMENTARY: Lakṣmaṇā then spoke. She thought that the other queens spoke the stories of their good fortune very briefly because of shyness, though the events were full of the highest bliss. She then thought that

perhaps Draupadī's and her own wedding were most attractive. Being proud of these two weddings, taking advantage after the senior seven queens, she began speaking of her own wedding in detail without restraint.

From Devakī I heard of the birth of Kṛṣṇa, full of all powers (acyutasya), and heard of his activities in Gokula, and his form and qualities as well. "Bhadrā became attracted to him because of knowing of his birth, since he was close as a cousin. How did you hear about him?" I heard constantly about him through Nārada and became constantly attracted to him. The word ha indicates joy. "But it is not proper to be attracted to someone who has many other lovers." On considering this, she says that he alone was her goal. Lakṣmī, holding the lotus, having many attractive gestures, on considering carefully (su and sam indicate her ability to do so), rejected Brahmā, Śiva and others completely, without even looking at them, and chose Mukunda at the time of churning the Milk Ocean. I became attracted to him alone, with similar consideration. Or, my heart was attracted to Mukunda. Fixed on him alone after careful consideration, with a lotus in my hand, giving up all the great kings, I chose him. This is also suggested by taking the second part of the verse as the actions of Lakṣmī. She speaks the pastime in brief in this verse and then gives details in the following verses.

Text 83.18

jñātvā mama mataṁ sādhvi pitā duhitṛ-vatsalaḥ
bṛhatsena iti khyātas tatropāyam acīkarat

My father, Bṛhatsena, was by nature compassionate to his daughter, and knowing my decision, O saintly lady, he arranged to fulfill my desire.

COMMENTARY: Matam means her decision.

Text 83.19

yathā svayaṁ-vare rājñi matsyaḥ pārthepsayā kṛtaḥ
ayaṁ tu bahir ācchanno dṛśyate sa jale param

Just as a fish was used as a target in your svayaṁ-vara ceremony, O Queen, to assure that you would obtain Arjuna as your husband, so a fish was also used in my ceremony. In my case, however, it was concealed on all sides, and only its reflection could be seen in a pot of water below.

COMMENTARY: She describes the method. As (yathā) your father arranged for the test, so my father arranged in a similar way. As the fish was pierced Arjuna's arrow (pārtheṣuṇā instead of pārthepṣayā), so the fish was pierced by Kṛṣṇa's arrow. Though the fish could be seen by glancing upwards from the base of the pillar, from far away one had to pierce a covering in order to pierce the fish. It was more difficult to locate the fish because it also rotated. But the task was made even more difficult to pierce by my father. The target could not be directly seen but only by a reflection in the water. The pillar was in the middle of water and one had to approach the column by going through water. One could not determine the whereabouts of the target before looking into the water.

Text 83.20

śrutvaitat sarvato bhū-pā āyayur mat-pituḥ puram
sarvāstra-śastra-tattva-jñāḥ sopādhyāyāḥ sahasraśaḥ

Hearing of this, thousands of kings expert in shooting arrows and in wielding other weapons converged from all directions on my father's city, accompanied by their military teachers.

COMMENTARY: Hearing about this amazing and enticing challenge, many kings came.

Text 83.21

pitrā sampūjitāḥ sarve yathā-vīryaṁ yathā-vayaḥ
ādaduḥ sa-śaraṁ cāpaṁ veddhuṁ parṣadi mad-dhiyaḥ

My father properly honored each king according to his strength and seniority. Then those whose minds were fixed on me took up the bow and arrow and one by one tried to pierce the target in the midst of the assembly.

COMMENTARY: The special bow was placed there by my father. With pride they tried to pierce the fish. They made great efforts to pierce the fish in order to obtain me (mad-dhiyaḥ).

Text 83.22

ādāya vyasṛjan kecit sajyaṁ kartum anīśvarāḥ
ā-koṣṭhaṁ jyāṁ samutkṛṣya petur eke ’munāhatāḥ

Some of them picked up the bow but could not string it, and so they threw it aside in frustration. Some managed to pull the bowstring toward the tip of the bow, only to have the bow spring back and knock them to the ground.

COMMENTARY: Some strong warriors managed to pull the string from one tip of the bow to the other tip but were struck by the bow since they were unable to string it. The bow recoiled and hit them.

Text 83.23

sajyaṁ kṛtvāpare vīrā māgadhāmbaṣṭha-cedipāḥ
bhīmo duryodhanaḥ karṇo nāvidaṁs tad-avasthitim

A few heroes—namely Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla, Bhīma, Duryodhana, Karṇa and the King of Ambaṣṭha—succeeded in stringing the bow, but none of them could find the target.

COMMENTARY: Ambaṣṭha refers to the king of that region.

Text 83.24

matsyābhāsaṁ jale vīkṣya jñātvā ca tad-avasthitim
pārtho yatto ’sṛjad bāṇaṁ nācchinat paspṛśe param

Then Arjuna looked at the reflection of the fish in the water and determined its position. When he carefully shot his arrow at it, however, he did not pierce the target but merely grazed it.

COMMENTARY: With great concentration (vi), constantly, Arjuna saw (īkṣya) the fish reflected in the water. He just touched the fish. The arrow touched the fish in one spot but not in the center. One could understand that the arrow touched the fish because there was a mark left by the arrow. Arjuna did this on purpose in order to spread the glories of the Lord.

Text 83.25–26

rājanyeṣu nivṛtteṣu bhagna-māneṣu māniṣu
bhagavān dhanur ādāya sajyaṁ kṛtvātha līlayā

tasmin sandhāya viśikhaṁ matsyaṁ vīkṣya sakṛj jale
chittveṣuṇāpātayat taṁ sūrye cābhijiti sthite

After all the arrogant kings had given up, their pride broken, the Supreme Lord picked up the bow, easily strung it and then fixed his arrow upon it. As the sun stood in the constellation Abhijit, he looked at the fish in the water only once and then pierced it with the arrow, knocking it to the ground.

COMMENTARY: He looked at the fish playfully (vi-īkṣya). He pierced the fish at noon (abhijiti sthiti). With the sun high in the sky it was harder to aim.

Text 83.27

divi dundubhayo nedur jaya-śabda-yutā bhuvi
devāś ca kusumāsārān mumucur harṣa-vihvalāḥ

Kettledrums resounded in the sky, and on the earth people shouted "Jaya! Jaya!" Overjoyed, devatās showered flowers.

COMMENTARY: Simultaneously people on earth shouted "Victory!" and devatās in the sky sounded drums.

Text 83.28

tad raṅgam āviśam ahaṁ kala-nūpurābhyāṁ
padbhyāṁ pragṛhya kanakojjvala-ratna-mālām
nūtne nivīya paridhāya ca kauśikāgrye
sa-vrīḍa-hāsa-vadanā kavarī-dhṛta-srak

Just then I walked onto the ceremonial ground, the ankle bells on my feet gently tinkling. I was wearing new garments of the finest silk, tied with a belt, and I carried a brilliant necklace fashioned of gold and jewels. There was a shy smile on my face and a wreath of flowers in my hair.

COMMENTARY: I held with great respect (pra-gṛhya) a garland in my hands. I wore new silk cloth for the wedding. I was shy in the assembly. A smile appeared on my face because of the satisfaction caused by inner bliss. This was the nature of her face, not something created at that moment.

Text 83.29

unnīya vaktram uru-kuntala-kuṇḍala-tviḍ-
gaṇḍa-sthalaṁ śiśira-hāsa-kaṭākṣa-mokṣaiḥ
rājño nirīkṣya paritaḥ śanakair murārer
aṁse ʼnurakta-hṛdayā nidadhe sva-mālām

I lifted my face, which was encircled by my abundant locks and which was effulgent from the glow of my earrings reflected from my cheeks. Smiling coolly, I glanced about. Then, looking around at all the kings, I slowly placed the necklace on the shoulder of Murāri, who had captured my heart.

COMMENTARY: Her locks fell over the edges of her cheeks since her locks were tied in a special way near her ears. I looked at the kings present with disdain, and then looked at Kṛṣṇa with cooling, smiling glances. With attached heart, I placed a garland that I had made with my own hands (sva-mālām) for him on the shoulders of Murārī, killer of Mura, qualified as the greatest hero. My face had abundant locks around them and my cheeks shone with earrings. Or, the face had cheeks shining with earrings and abundant locks. Śiśira means cool or faint. Going (ayā) with attracted heart (hṛd) to Murāri, I placed the garland on his shoulder. This indicates their mutual love.

Text 83.30

tāvan mṛdaṅga-paṭahāḥ śaṅkha-bhery-ānakādayaḥ
ninedur naṭa-nartakyo nanṛtur gāyakā jaguḥ

Just then there were loud sounds of conchs and mṛdaṅga, paṭaha, bherī and ānaka drums, as well as other instruments. Men and women began to dance, and singers began to sing.

COMMENTARY: At that moment (tāvat) drums sounded.

Text 83.31

evaṁ vṛte bhagavati mayeśe nṛpa-yūthapāḥ
na sehire yājñaseni spardhanto hṛc-chayāturāḥ

The leading kings there could not tolerate my having chosen the Supreme Lord, O Draupadī. Burning with lust, they became quarrelsome.

COMMENTARY: When I chose Kṛṣṇa endowed with all powers (bhagavati) since he was directly the Supreme Lord (īśe), in this manner (evam vṛte), at that moment also, the best of the kings such as Jarāsandha could not tolerate the situation. O Yājñaseni, Draupadī, daughter of Drupada! As the daughter to Drupada, devoted to sacrifice, just see the great arrogance of these kings.

Text 83.32

māṁ tāvad ratham āropya haya-ratna-catuṣṭayam
śārṅgam udyamya sannaddhas tasthāv ājau catur-bhujaḥ

The Lord then placed me on his chariot, drawn by four most excellent horses. Holding his bow Śārṅga, ready for combat, he stood on the chariot, and manifested his four arms.

COMMENTARY: With four excellent horses, the chariot could travel at great speed. Ready (sannaddhaḥ) to fight (ājau), he stood on the chariot, remaining in a high position.

Text 83.33

dārukaś codayām āsa kāñcanopaskaraṁ ratham
miṣatāṁ bhū-bhujāṁ rājñi mṛgāṇāṁ mṛga-rāḍ iva

Dāruka drove the Lord's gold-trimmed chariot as the kings looked on, O Queen, like small animals helplessly watching a lion.

COMMENTARY: Dāruka drove the gold-plated chariot, which could thus be seen from far away, while the kings looked on. Possessive case (miṣatāṁ bhū-bhujāṁ) is used to should disrespect for the kings. They were like animals watching a lion. This indicates Dāruka's fearlessness. She called out to Draupadī "O queen!" in great enthusiasm.

Text 83.34

te 'nvasajjanta rājanyā niṣeddhuṁ pathi kecana
saṁyattā uddhṛteṣv-āsā grāma-siṁhā yathā harim

Some kings pursued the Lord to stop him. Left behind, some kings, with raised bows, gathered on the road. They were like village dogs with a lion.

COMMENTARY: The kings with raised bows were like dogs with raised tails. Another meaning is as follows. Because of the chariot's speed, some of the kings could not even raise their bows and remained far behind. Some foolish kings on swift chariots chased him to stop him on the path. They were eager for battle and thus raised their bows.

Text 83.35

te śārṅga-cyuta-bāṇaughaiḥ kṛtta-bāhv-aṅghri-kandharāḥ
nipetuḥ pradhane kecid eke santyajya dudruvuḥ

These warriors were deluged by arrows shot from the Lord's bow, Śārṅga. Some of the kings fell on the battlefield with severed arms, legs and necks; the rest gave up the fight and fled.

COMMENTARY: By the mass of arrows emanating as if by themselves from his bow, some kings had their arms severed, some had their feet severed and some had their heads severed. Or, simultaneously they had their arms, legs and heads severed. First, he cut off their arms which held weapons for fighting and then cut off their legs to make them fall down. To make them die swiftly, he cut off their heads. This indicates the swiftness of his arrows. They fell down permanently (ni-petuḥ) on the battlefield—dead. Giving up the battlefield completely (sam-tyajya), going far away, some swiftly fled.

Text 83.36

tataḥ purīṁ yadu-patir aty-alaṅkṛtāṁ
ravi-cchada-dhvaja-paṭa-citra-toraṇām
kuśasthalīṁ divi bhuvi cābhisaṁstutāṁ
samāviśat taraṇir iva sva-ketanam

The Lord of the Yadus then entered his capital city, Kuśasthalī [Dvārakā], which is glorified in heaven and on earth. The city was elaborately decorated with flagpoles carrying banners that blocked the sun, and also with splendid archways. As Kṛṣṇa entered, he appeared like the sun-god entering his abode.

COMMENTARY: After this (tataḥ), not without first defeating the kings, he entered Dvārakā, since he was the best of the great warriors (yadu-patiḥ). Or, he was the husband (patiḥ) among the Yadus, since he had now

attained a wife. The details of the city decorated at that time for his entrance indicate the joy that had arisen in the Yadus. That city was praised profusely (abhi-saṁstutām) in heaven and on earth as the greatest. It was an extraordinary city even without the present decorations. He entered the city just like the sun, which shines independently and illuminates its surroundings when entering its area in the sky (sva-ketanam). He entered with the accompaniment of music (sam) and with bliss (ā). Taruṇi is also a name of Viṣṇu. He entered Dvārakā just as Viṣṇu enters Vaikuṇṭha.

Text 83.37

pitā me pūjayām āsa suhṛt-sambandhi-bāndhavān
mahārha-vāso-'laṅkāraiḥ śayyāsana-paricchadaiḥ

My father honored his friends, family and in-laws with priceless clothing and jewelry and with royal beds, thrones and other furnishings.

COMMENTARY: The king honored the Lord's friends, relations through that marriage (sambandhi) and other relatives as well (bāndhavān). At the time of the marriage, the king himself came to Dvārakā.

Text 83.38

dāsībhiḥ sarva-sampadbhir bhaṭebha-ratha-vājibhiḥ
āyudhāni mahārhāṇi dadau pūrṇasya bhaktitaḥ

With devotion he presented the perfectly complete Lord with a number of maidservants bedecked with precious ornaments. Accompanying these maidservants were guards walking on foot and others riding elephants, chariots and horses. He also gave the Lord extremely valuable weapons.

COMMENTARY: The king gave servants endowed with all wealth of ornaments and new youth and a similarly endowed army with four parts. Or he gave, along with all wealth and servants, brave foot soldiers etc. He gave so generously because of his devotion (bhaktitaḥ). It was already said that the Lord accepts even leaves if given with devotion. (SB 10.81.4) The example of the sun and lamp should be considered. Raver dīpam ivādṛtāḥ: these presentations were like the offering of a lamp to the sun. (SB 1.11.4)

Text 83.39

ātmārāmasya tasyemā vayaṁ vai gṛha-dāsikāḥ
sarva-saṅga-nivṛttyāddhā tapasā ca babhūvima

Thus, by renouncing all material association and practicing austere penances, we queens have all become personal maidservants of the self-satisfied Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY: Having described herself profusely out of enthusiasm, she now in embarrassment satisfies all the elder queens and concludes. Because of being complete in himself, he is qualified to perform pastimes only with himself. Still, we have become his household servants. The cause is only his mercy. She hides the boldness she showed in telling her story by indicating her humility as a servant, which indicates her bhakti.

Text 83.40

mahiṣya ūcuḥ
bhaumaṁ nihatya sa-gaṇaṁ yudhi tena ruddhā
jñātvātha naḥ kṣiti-jaye jita-rāja-kanyāḥ
nirmucya saṁsṛti-vimokṣam anusmarantīḥ
pādāmbujaṁ pariṇināya ya āpta-kāmaḥ

Rohiṇī-devi, speaking for the other queens, said: After killing Bhaumāsura and his followers, the Lord found us in the demon's prison and could understand that we were the daughters of the kings whom Bhauma had defeated during his conquest of the earth. The Lord set us free, and because we had been constantly meditating upon his lotus feet, the source of liberation from material entanglement, he agreed to marry us, though his every desire is already fulfilled.

COMMENTARY: Three verses (40-42) are grammatically related. We desire the dust of lotus feet of he (etasya, verse 42) who married us (verse 40). Since he was the son of the earth, Bhauma could not normally be killed. However, Kṛṣṇa killed him decisively (ni-hatya) in battle, since he also killed his followers. "Why did he kill the son of the earth?" He understood that we were imprisoned by him. This means that other reasons were secondary. After killing Bhauma he then freed us completely from bondage (nirmucya), taking us to Dvārakā. They indicate their superiority to those

who have knowledge of the Lord as a cause of being freed: we constantly remembered his lotus feet which cause liberation from saṁsāra. Thus we were liberated from its suffering (vi-moksāṇam), what to speak of delivering us from imprisonment. Though he has all his desires fulfilled, he married us. They indicated his great mercy by them. Or, though he is full in his desires he married us to free us from saṁsāra, what to speak of delivering us from material happiness in this life and the next. Remembering his lotus feet, we have no desire at all for material wealth.

Text 83.41–42

na vayaṁ sādhvi sāmrājyaṁ svārājyaṁ bhaujyam apy uta
vairājyaṁ pārameṣṭhyaṁ ca ānantyaṁ vā hareḥ padam
kāmayāmaha etasya śrīmat-pāda-rajaḥ śriyaḥ
kuca-kuṅkuma-gandhāḍhyaṁ mūrdhnā voḍhuṁ gadā-bhṛtaḥ

O saintly lady, we do not desire enjoyment from dominion over the earth, the sovereignty of the King of heaven, mystic power, the position of Brahmā, immortality or even attainment of the kingdom of God. We simply desire to carry on our heads the glorious dust of Kṛṣṇa's feet, enriched by the fragrance of kuṅkuma from his consort's bosom.

COMMENTARY: We simply desire to be his servants. This is expressed in two verses. O Draupadī, fixed in vows to your husbands (sādhvi)! You will understand this. Bhaujyam means material enjoyment. This sequence of enjoyment follows the list in the Bahvṛca-brāhmaṇa. We do not desire enjoyment nor great mystic powers (vairājyam). The order of enjoyment is with increasing excellence. He is called gadā-bhrtaḥ because he used his club to kill Nāraka. Gadayā nirbibhedādrīn: with his club the Lord broke through the rock fortifications. (SB 10.59.4) Prākāraṁ gadayā gurvyā nirbibheda gadādharaḥ: with his heavy club he demolished the surrounding earthen ramparts. (SB 10.59.5)

We desire the dust of even one of his feet which holds all wealth (śrīmat). Or śrīmāt can modify the dust. Those feet are enriched with the fragrance of kuṅkuma from the breast of Lakṣmī (Rādhā). The queens indicate by this Kṛṣṇa's supreme position.

Text 83.43

vraja-striyo yad vāñchanti pulindyas tṛṇa-vīrudhaḥ
gāvaś cārayato gopāḥ pada-sparśaṁ mahātmanaḥ

We desire the same contact with the Supreme Lord's feet that the young women of Vraja, aborigine Pulinda women, the grass, bushes and cowherd boys who desire—the touch of feet of Kṛṣṇa whose glory is spread everywhere and who herds the cows.

COMMENTARY: Lakṣmī is better than all women. How will you attain what she attains? He is attained by the greatness of prema not by the greatness of being a woman or anything else. It has previously been said that the Pulinda women had their desires fulfilled. (SB 10.21.17) Similarly the grass and bushes, the creepers and trees growing in Vṛndāvana had their desires fulfilled. (SB 10.35.9) The women of Vraja, the Pulindas, the trees and creepers and the cowherds all desire the touch of his feet. The degree of prema is from superior (women of Vraja) to lesser. The women of Vraja desire that touch, what to speak of the Pulindas. The grass is superior to the creepers because of having intimate contact with him. What can be said? They all (female gender) desire that touch. The cowherds (males) desire the touch of his feet in order to massage them. They desire the touch of the feet of Kṛṣṇa who spreads everywhere by his power (mahātmanaḥ) and herds the cows by his mercy. Śrīdhara Svāmī says that verse 41 is in answer to the question "Since you household women enjoy all wealth, why do you desire him?" They have a desire for nothing but him. Verse 42 is in answer to the question, "Why do you desire the dust from his feet? If you do not desire anything else, why do you also desire the dust?"

Another meaning is as follows. Concerning verse 41, śruti (Taittirīya Upaniṣad) speaks of various degrees of happiness starting with that of humans. If human happiness is multiplied ten thousand times it is the happiness of Brahmā. This is the highest happiness. The happiness of parabrahman is unlimited (ānantyam). Yato vāco nivartante: words cannot describe it. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad) What then to speak of the happiness of sāmīpya with the Lord, the husband of Lakṣmī? We do not desire any of those things, even secondarily. We do not want them as secondary goals. "What do you desire to attain more than that?" We desire to carry that dust of his feet on our heads. We take him as our husband. Moreover, we

desire those feet possessing the fragrance of Lakṣmī's kuṅkuma. "But you have given up the foot of the husband of Lakṣmī perfumed with her kuṅkuma. If śriyaḥ means Rukmiṇī, you have attained that foot dust with her kuṅkuma." To make the real meaning of śriyaḥ understood, they then speak the present verse.

pūrṇāḥ pulindya urugāya-padābja-rāga
śrī-kuṅkumena dayitā-stana-maṇḍitena
tad-darśana-smara-rujas tṛṇa-rūṣitena
limpantya ānana-kuceṣu jahus tad-ādhim

The aborigine women of the Vṛndāvana area become disturbed by lust when they see the grass marked with reddish kuṅkuma powder. Endowed with the color of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, this powder originally decorated the breasts of his beloveds, and when the aborigine women smear it on their faces and breasts, they feel fully satisfied and give up all their anxiety. SB 10.21.17

According to these words, the queens desire what the women of Vraja desire. The present tense is used to show continuous desire. In listing the Pulinda women and others, the queens desire to state their qualification for attaining that dust. They desired what the plants obtained:

kevalena hi bhāvena gopyo gāvo nagā mṛgāḥ
ye 'nye mūḍha-dhiyo nāgāḥ siddhā mām īyur añjasā

The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, including the gopīs, cows, unmoving creatures such as the twin arjuna trees, animals, living entities with stunted consciousness such as bushes and thickets, and snakes such as Kāliya, all achieved the perfection of life by unalloyed love for me and thus very easily achieved me. SB 11.12.8

Some of the cowherds herding the cows were priya-sakhas. Though they also took pleasure in such dust, they were unqualified since they were males. Thus, they are placed last in the list. The meaning is this. She who is famous as Lakṣmī desired this also, but she did not attain it. The wives of Kāliya say:

kasyānubhāvo 'sya na deva vidmahe
tavāṅghri-reṇu-sparaśādhikāraḥ

yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo
vihāya kāmān su-ciraṁ dhṛta-vratā

O Lord, we do not know how the serpent Kāliya has attained this great opportunity of being touched by the dust of your lotus feet. For this end, the goddess of fortune performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and taking austere vows. SB 10 16.37

Rukmiṇī who is famous as Śrī also did not attain it, since she was not a woman of Vraja, belonging to a different time and place. The desire of Lakṣmī is also stated in the following:

nāyaṁ śriyo ’ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ
svar-yoṣitāṁ nalina-gandha-rucāṁ kuto ’nyāḥ
rāsotsave ’sya bhuja-daṇḍa-gṛhīta-kaṇṭha-
labdhāśiṣāṁ ya udagād vraja-sundarīṇām

The gopīs received benedictions from the Lord that neither Lakṣmī nor the most beautiful dancers in the heavenly planets could attain. In the rāsa dance, the Lord showed his favor to the most fortunate gopīs by placing his arms on their shoulders and dancing with each of them individually. No one can compare with the gopīs, who received the causeless mercy of the Lord. SB 10.47.60

It is said that the women of Vraja more qualified than Rukmiṇī. In Skanda Purāṇa it is said rukmiṇī dvāravatyāṁ tu rādhā vṛndāvane vane: Rukmiṇī is in Dvārakā what Rādhā is in the forest of Vṛndāvana.

devī kṛṣṇa-mayī proktā rādhikā para-devatā
sarva-lakṣmī-mayī sarva kāntiḥ sammohinī parā

The goddess Rādhārāṇī is the direct counterpart of Kṛṣṇa. She is the embodiment of all the goddesses of fortune. She possesses all attractiveness to attract the Lord. Gautamīya-tantra

Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra also says that Rādhā is supreme among all the gopīs and reigns as Śrī. The gopīs also describe Rādhā:

anayārādhito nūnaṁ bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ
yan no vihāya govindaḥ prīto yām anayad rahaḥ

Certainly, this particular gopī has perfectly worshiped the all-powerful Govinda, since he was so pleased with her that he abandoned the rest of

us and brought her to a secluded place. SB 10.30.28

apy eṇa-patny upagataḥ priyayeha gātrais
tanvan dṛśāṁ sakhi su-nirvṛtim acyuto vaḥ
kāntāṅga-saṅga-kuca-kuṅkuma-rañjitāyāḥ
kunda-srajaḥ kula-pater iha vāti gandhaḥ

O friend, wife of the deer, has Acyuta been here with his beloved, bringing great joy to your eyes? Indeed, blowing this way is the fragrance of his garland of kunda flowers, which was smeared with the kuṅkuma from the breasts of his girlfriend when he embraced her. SB 10.30.11

Thus the queens desire what the gopīs desired. The queens desired that there would be an appearance of his feet perfumed with kuṅkuma with an appearance of similar prema. Not only did they desire the foot dust but they desired a similar touch of his feet. They desired him. Or, they desired the touch of his feet with its dust. There is non-difference of the two since both have unfailing results. Kṛṣṇa's nature is to have the best manifestation (ātmanaḥ) of beauty and other equalities which spread everywhere (mahā). Śukadeva says:

tatrātiśuśubhe tābhir bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ
madhye maṇīnāṁ haimānāṁ mahā-marakato yathā

In the midst of the dancing gopīs, Kṛṣṇa appeared most brilliant, like an exquisite sapphire in the midst of golden ornaments. SB 10.33.6

Chapter Eighty-four
The Sages' Teachings at Kuruksetra

Text 84.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
śrutvā pṛthā subala-putry atha yājñasenī
mādhavy atha kṣitipa-patnya uta sva-gopyaḥ
kṛṣṇe 'khilātmani harau praṇayānubandhaṁ
sarvā visismyur alam aśru-kalākulākṣyaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Pṛthā, Gāndhārī, Draupadī, Subhadrā, the wives of other kings and the Lord's cowherd girīfriends were all amazed to hear of the queens' deep love for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord and soul of all beings, and their eyes filled with tears.

COMMENTARY: The previous subject is concluded by praising it. Draupadī was the main person who heard since she made the proposal and asked the question. Gāndhārī and others were secondary listeners since only their names are given. They heard from others, not directly, since it would have been improper that after independently making the attractive proposal, she would have the queens speak in front of them. Kuntī and Gāndhārī are mentioned first since they were senior. The word atha, indicating distinction from the rest, used with Draupadī and Subhadrā, indicates that the two were at this time on the same level. Then the wives of other kings are listed. They heard from the previous persons or from others. The gopīs are mentioned separately from all the others by use of the word uta to indicate they were far away and also not direct hearers. The word sva announces that their prema was hundreds of times greater than the previously mentioned persons. Thus it was astonishing that they listened. Or the word sva (his own) can indicate they were under his protection and were his dear friends. Thus the gopīs are mentioned separately with the word sva. Kuntī and Gāndhārī were amazed at the queens' dedication as Kṛṣṇa's wives. Draupadī was amazed because of the queens' bhāva. Subhadrā was amazed by their affection for Kṛṣṇa. The wives of the kings were amazed according to their qualification. The gopīs

were amazed at the queen's bhāva, which was intense like their own. Each was amazed according to how each took shelter of Kṛṣṇa.

The phrase praṇayānubandham (attachment in love) indicates that each woman was amazed according to her own capacity. Not only were they amazed at the queens' love but felt joyful affection for the Lord. Some felt general prema and others felt more specific emotions similar to the queens' love, for their eyes became filled with streams of tears. "Some felt like this since they had great affection for Kṛṣṇa, but why did the others also have tears?" This is because Kṛṣṇa is attractive to all, since he is the root form of all material and spiritual beings (akhilātmani), and attractive to all by his form and qualities (harau).

Text 84.2–5

iti sambhāṣamāṇāsu strībhiḥ strīṣu nṛbhir nṛṣu
āyayur munayas tatra kṛṣṇa-rāma-didṛkṣayā
dvaipāyano nāradaś ca cyavano devalo 'sitaḥ
viśvāmitraḥ śatānando bharadvājo 'tha gautamaḥ
rāmaḥ sa-śiṣyo bhagavān vasiṣṭho gālavo bhṛguḥ
pulastyaḥ kaśyapo 'triś ca mārkaṇḍeyo bṛhaspatiḥ
dvitas tritaś caikataś ca brahma-putrās tathāṅgirāḥ
agastyo yājñavalkyaś ca vāmadevādayo 'pare

As the women thus talked among themselves and the men among themselves, a number of great sages arrived there, all of them eager to see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. They included Dvaipāyana, Nārada, Cyavana, Devala and Asita, Viśvāmitra, Śatānanda, Bharadvāja and Gautama, Lord Paraśurāma and his disciples, Vasiṣṭha, Gālava, Bhṛgu, Pulastya and Kaśyapa, Atri, Mārkaṇḍeya and Bṛhaspati, Dvita, Trita, Ekata and the four Kumāras, and Aṅgirā, Agastya, Yājñavalkya and Vāmadeva.

COMMENTARY: While various interesting events took place, another interesting event occurred. Sages arrived in a spectacular manner (ājamuḥ). Another version has āyayuḥ. The sages are listed in three verses (3-5). Dvaipāyaṇa is mentioned first out of great respect as a father among sages. The others are listed in the order that they arrived. Paraśurāma is addressed as bhagavān because of his great position as one of the ten avatāras. Dvita, Trita, Ekata are described as sons of Brahmā (brahma-

putrāḥ) but since they were not actually sons of Brahmā, some say the phrase should be brahma-putraḥ (modifying Aṅgirās). Or brahma-putrāḥ refers to the Kumāras. Others who came were Parāśara, Maitreya and Vaiśampāyana.

Text 84.6

tān dṛṣṭvā sahasotthāya prāg āsīnā nṛpādayaḥ
pāṇḍavāḥ kṛṣṇa-rāmau ca praṇemur viśva-vanditān

As soon as they saw the sages approaching, the kings and other gentlemen who had been seated immediately stood up, including the Pāṇḍava brothers and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. They all then bowed down to the sages, who are honored throughout the universe.

COMMENTARY: Seeing the sages, everyone rose immediately, without even thinking. If they had not been eager at the coming of the sages, they would not have shown the behavior of immediately rising from their seats. Not only that, they came forward and personally brought the sages to the assembly, as will be described. Not only the kings, but Nārada and the priests rose and offered respects since the sages were honored by the universe, even by the Lord.

Text 84.7

tān ānarcur yathā sarve saha-rāmo 'cyuto 'rcayat
svāgatāsana-pādyārghya-mālya-dhūpānulepanaiḥ

Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and the other kings and leaders properly worshiped the sages by offering them words of greeting, sitting places, water for washing their feet, drinking water, flower garlands, incense and sandalwood paste.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa, full of all powers (acyutaḥ), along with Balarāma and all others, worshipped the sages with items of worship starting with svāgata (welcome), using proper items (yathā). Since Kṛṣṇa was the root form of all of the sages, by worshiping them, worship of Kṛṣṇa was also accomplished. Another version has arcayan instead of arcayat. Each of the sages was worshiped with the articles as each arrived, but not in the order listed. Or, each was worshipped with the articles in this order, as part of the

method of worship. One must first remedy any misfortune that has occurred to the protectors of the worlds by welcome. Then one should offer a seat. After that one should offer foot wash with drops of water, using a pot for sprinkling water. Ācamana is also included in this. Then when the person is in good health, one should off arghya and other items with attention. Then one should offer unguents like sandalwood.

Text 84.8

uvāca sukham āsīnān bhagavān dharma-gup-tanuḥ
sadasas tasya mahato yata-vāco ʼnuśṛṇvataḥ

After the sages were comfortably seated, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose body protects dharma, addressed them in the midst of that great assembly. Everyone listened silently with rapt attention.

COMMENTARY: He spoke since he had appeared in the world to protect dharma. Persons even of great stature were silent, since they wanted to hear his words.

Text 84.9

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
aho vayaṁ janma-bhṛto labdhaṁ kārtsnyena tat-phalam
devānām api duṣprāpaṁ yad yogeśvara-darśanam

The Supreme Lord said: Now our lives are indeed successful, for we have obtained life's ultimate goal: the audience of great yoga masters, which even devatās only rarely obtain.

COMMENTARY: Aho expresses joy. We as human beings have now met you who are accomplished (īśvara) in various yogas like bhakti, jñāna and karma according to your practice. You have the power to give or prevent attainment of these. Or yogeśvara can mean simply great devotees. This is a general description which actually includes many types of sages, though there was a prominence of devotees. He spoke in this way to respect them all.

Text 84.10

kiṁ svalpa-tapasāṁ nṝṇām arcāyāṁ deva-cakṣuṣām
darśana-sparśana-praśna-prahva-pādārcanādikam

How is it that people who are not very austere and who recognize God only in his deity form in the temple can now see you, touch you, inquire from you, bow down to you, worship your feet and serve you in other ways?

COMMENTARY: Devatās have done great austerities, but still cannot see you. Men with little austerity see the Lord in the deity form. Though we see the deity and know about the svarūpa of the Lord, how is it possible that we who are unfortunate see and touch you? It is not possible. This can happen only by your mercy.

Text 84.11

na hy am-mayāni tīrthāni na devā mṛc-chilā-mayāḥ
te punanty uru-kālena darśanād eva sādhavaḥ

Mere bodies of water are not the real sacred places of pilgrimage, nor are mere images of earth and stone the true worshipable deities. These purify one only after a long time, but saintly sages purify one immediately upon being seen.

COMMENTARY: By serving holy places and deities whose glories are proved in the scriptures, humans destroy their faults and develop spiritual knowledge. That is true, but this occurs by your presence to a much higher degree. He expresses lamentation. Bodies of water like rivers do not purify just by seeing them. Deities made of earth or stone, which are non-different from the devatā since the devatā resides there, do not purify just by seeing them. But the saintly persons purify others just by being seen.

Text 84.12

nāgnir na sūryo na ca candra-tārakā
na bhūr jalaṁ khaṁ śvasano 'tha vāṅ manaḥ
upāsitā bheda-kṛto haranty aghaṁ
vipaścito ghnanti muhūrta-sevayā

Neither the devatās controlling fire, the sun, the moon and the stars nor those in charge of earth, water, ether, air, speech and mind, who see in

terms of duality, remove the sins of their worshipers. But wise sages who see the Lord destroy one's sins when served for even a few moments.

COMMENTARY: "Worship of deities by seeing them and serving places holy because of deities, or worshipping those holy places, may be less effective. But what about worshipping the material elements?" Worship of persons like yourselves is the best of all. Tāraka refers to the presiding deities such as Bṛhaspati for the planet Jupiter. Bheda-kṛtaḥ (seeing with duality) means that these persons say to others "I am Indra," or "I am Varuṇa." Nor do such persons announce to others that the Supreme Lord is non-different from everything. Or by not seeing the Lord, they think in terms of distinctions everywhere. But those who see the Supreme Lord, those who reveal the Supreme Lord to others, destroy sins, whose root is ignorance, even if one serves them for only a moment.

Text 84.13

yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ

One who identifies his self as the inert body composed of mucus, bile and air, who assumes his wife and family are permanently his own, who thinks an earthen image or the land of his birth is worshipable, or who sees a place of pilgrimage as merely the water there, but who never identifies himself with, feels kinship with, worships or even visits those who are wise in spiritual truth—such a person is no better than a cow or an ass.

COMMENTARY: The body is by its nature equal to a corpse (kuṇapaḥ), composed of three dhātus that are the root of all diseases. In spite of teachings about the jīva and the Lord, people think that this corpse is the ātmā, since they have a wrong conception of ātmā. This is not the proper use of intelligence. Intelligence should appreciate those who know about the Lord, the supreme ātmā of all beings. They will also then become full of the Supreme Lord. People fix their intelligence on persons associated with their bodies, such as wife and family instead of on persons associated with the Lord. They think of ordinary water as holy. "I have become cleansed by

taking a bath." They do not think that the tīrtha waters are equivalent to the Lord who is called tīrtha-pāda, the basis of holy places. Their intelligence never identifies with the saintly people. They are at fault. They are considered the most fallen since they are devoid of all intelligence. Such persons are like cows (go) with no intelligence and like donkeys, low animals (kharaḥ). In the forest on the bank of the Sindhu River there is an animal called gokhara, a type of donkey, a useless animal. The word also refers to a mleccha king. In Bṛhaspati-saṁhitā this gokhara is a non-vaiṣṇava:

ajñāta-bhagavad-dharma-mantra-vijñāna-saṁvidaḥ
narās te gokharā jñeyā api bhūpāla-vanditāḥ

Persons ignorant of dharma, mantras, spiritual knowledge concerning the Lord, even though they are kings, are called gokhara.

Though a person worships the deity of the Lord, he may be a kaniṣṭha but he is not a gokhara. In the Eleventh Canto it is said:

arcāyām eva haraye pūjāṁ yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

A person who is very faithfully engaged in the worship of the deity in the temple but does not know how to behave toward devotees or people in general is called a kaniṣṭha-adhikārī. SB 11.2.47

Condemnation of deity worship and holy places is from the general point of view.

Text 84.14

śrī-śuka uvāca
niśamyetthaṁ bhagavataḥ kṛṣṇasyākuṇtha-medhasaḥ
vaco duranvayaṁ viprās tūṣṇīm āsan bhramad-dhiyaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing such unfathomable words from the unlimitedly wise Kṛṣṇa, the learned brāhmaṇas remained silent and their minds became filled with doubt.

COMMENTARY: Hearing the words of Svayam Bhagavān (bhagavataḥ kṛṣṇasya), who had unlimited intelligence, words which were incoherent (duranvayam), since he spoke like a mortal person involved in karma, the

brahmaṇas (sages), knowing his greatness, became filled with doubt in their hearts (bhramad-dhiyaḥ) since they could not understand the meaning.

Text 84.15

ciraṁ vimṛśya munaya īśvarasyeśitavyatām
jana-saṅgraha ity ūcuḥ smayantas taṁ jagad-gurum

For some time, the sages pondered the Supreme Lord's behavior, which resembled that of a subordinate living being. They concluded that he was acting in this way to instruct the people in general. Thus they smiled and spoke to him, the origin of all good qualities in the universe.

COMMENTARY: They considered for a long time why he was acting as if controlled, and concluded that he must be acting with humility according to his human pastimes, as he had the best qualities, since he did not lack power, had no desire for power and did not lack knowledge. Looking at each other with astonishment, shyness and bliss, they smiled. He acted in this way in order to teach the people, or to attract the devotees (jana-saṅgraḥ) since he was the originator of all good qualities (jagad-guruḥ).

Text 84.16

śrī-munaya ūcuḥ
yan-māyayā tattva-vid-uttamā vayaṁ
vimohitā viśva-sṛjām adhīśvarāḥ
yad īśitavyāyati gūḍha īhayā
aho vicitram bhagavad-viceṣṭitam

The great sages said: Your power of illusion has totally bewildered us, the most exalted knowers of the truth and leaders among the universal creators. Ah, how amazing is the behavior of the Supreme Lord! He covers himself with his humanlike activities and pretends to be subject to superior control.

COMMENTARY: Again it is said that they spoke (munayaḥ ucuḥ). Five verses (16-20) describe their words. Two verses (16-17) explain how his words were incoherent. We are bewildered by your inconceivable śakti (māyayā), your activities (viceṣṭitam), even though we know all about how you take

various forms (tattva-vid-uttamāḥ). You hide yourself by your human actions and act as if you were not the Lord. Or, though you are difficult to understand through the Vedas, you act like a jīva in his various pastimes (ihayā). Parasmaipada verb form of īśitavyāyati is poetic license.

Text 84.17

anīha etad bahudhaika ātmanā
sṛjaty avaty atti na badhyate yathā
bhaumair hi bhūmir bahu-nāma-rūpiṇī
aho vibhūmnaś caritaṁ viḍambanam

The humanlike pastimes of the Almighty are simply a pretense! Effortlessly, he alone sends forth from himself this variegated creation, maintains it and then swallows it up again, all without becoming entangled, just as the element earth takes on many names and forms in its various transformations.

COMMENTARY: This happens all the time, not just now. You are one, without assistance. By yourself, without the assistance of another cause, by your svarūpa, you create and destroy even the whole universe, but you are without change (anīhaḥ) by action or by transformation. There is a great variety (bahudhā) by the manifestation of many different universes and various times. You are complete in yourself (vibhumnaḥ). Therefore your actions mock our intelligence (viḍambanam), since you possess acintya-śakti. Śrutes tu śabda-mūlatvāt: contradictions in the Lord are explained by scripture alone. (Brahma-sūtra 2.1.27)

Text 84.18

athāpi kāle sva-janābhiguptaye
bibharṣi sattvaṁ khala-nigrahāya ca
sva-līlayā veda-pathaṁ sanātanaṁ
varṇāśramātmā puruṣaḥ paro bhavān

Nonetheless, at suitable times you assume goodness to protect your devotees and punish the wicked and as a pastime, instituting varṇāśrama, you nourish the eternal path of the Vedas. You are beyond all human intelligence.

COMMENTARY: Though you have inconceivable śakti, at some time you clearly support sattva to protect your devotees and punish the wicked. In doing that as your pastime, you institute varṇāśrama and you nourish the path of the eternal Vedas. This is incomprehensible to us. How can we understand you? You surpass all methods of intelligence (paraḥ).

Text 84.19

brahma te hṛdayaṁ śuklaṁ tapaḥ-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ
yatropalabdhaṁ sad vyaktam avyaktaṁ ca tataḥ param

The Vedas are your form of mercy, and through them one can perceive—by means of action, understanding and self-control—the Lord beyond the universe and prakṛti.

COMMENTARY: "How do you protect your devotees by nourishing the path of the Vedas?" The Vedas (brahma) are your form (hṛdayam), made of pure mercy (śuklam). In the Vedas, by performing all rites, by learning all its meanings, by controlling the mind from wandering elsewhere, the supreme Brahman, Bhagavān (paraḥ), beyond the visible universe (vyaktam) and beyond prakṛti (avyaktam), is realized. By supporting the Vedas, you support your devotees.

Text 84.20

tasmād brahma-kulaṁ brahman śāstra-yones tvam ātmanaḥ
sabhājayasi sad dhāma tad brahmaṇyāgraṇīr bhavān

Therefore, O Supreme Brahman, you honor the members of the brahminical community, for they are the perfect agents by which one can realize you through the evidence of the Vedas. For that very reason you are the foremost worshiper of the brāhmaṇas.

COMMENTARY: "If I am like that, why do I worship you sages?" You honor the brāhmaṇas to teach the people. In the manner that they started the discussion with this concept, they finish with the same statement.

Text 84.21

adya no janma-sāphalyaṁ vidyāyās tapaso dṛśaḥ
tvayā saṅgamya sad-gatyā yad antaḥ śreyasāṁ paraḥ

Today our birth and knowledge of spiritual and material topics have all become perfect because we have been able to associate with you, the goal of all saintly persons. You are the ultimate, supreme blessing.

COMMENTARY: Let that be. Now we will reveal the bliss in our hearts by thinking of your inconceivable nature. Today, at this time, you reveal yourself as Svayam Bhagavān, without giving up the qualities we mentioned. Later Devakī will say avatīrṇau kilādya me: taking birth from me, you have now descended to this world. (SB 10.85.30) Today our births have been successful with the study of the Vedas, spiritual knowledge (tapasaḥ) of what is not visible in this world and knowledge of what is visible in this world (dṛśaḥ). What did we do? We have associated with you, the supreme shelter of your devotees (sad-gatyā). "You have realized Brahman. You have seen my remarkable appearances in this world. Why then do you describe your births as successful at the time of my appearance in the world?" You alone are the best of all human goals. You are the highest. Uddhava said:

yan martya-līlaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā gṛhītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
paraṁ padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam

Kṛṣṇa possesses that form suitable for human pastimes to show the full capacity of his yoga-māyā. That form astonishes even the lord of Vaikuṇṭha. It is the pinnacle of auspicious qualities and enhances the beauty of his ornaments. SB 3.2.12

Text 84.22

namas tasmai bhagavate kṛṣṇāyākuṇṭha-medhase
sva-yogamāyayācchanna-mahimne paramātmane

Let us offer obeisances unto that Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, the infinitely intelligent Supersoul, who has disguised his greatness through his yogamāyā.

COMMENTARY: Out of great devotion, with astonishment at Kṛṣṇa's greatness, the sages offer respects. The prayer is directly to Kṛṣṇa, expressing "We offer respects to you (tubhyam)." However, the sages say,

“We offer respects to him (tasmai).” Because of the appearance of great devotion, they indicate that he is beyond everyone’s understanding and vision by using the word tasmai, since he is Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa (bhagavate), superior to all others, with unlimited intelligence (akuṇṭha-medhase). “But if I always have unlimited intelligence, and am superior to all, why are you not always situated in knowledge (by knowing me)?” Your greatness is covered by your yoga-māyā. Nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyāsamāvṛtaḥ: covered by my yogamāyā I am not revealed to all. (BG 7.25) They previously said that they were bewildered by his māyā in verse 16. “How did you get knowledge at this time?” You are Paramātmā: by your merciful inspiration we have developed knowledge of you.

Text 84.23

na yaṁ vidanty amī bhū-pā ekārāmāś ca vṛṣṇayaḥ
māyā-javanikācchannam ātmānaṁ kālam īśvaram

Neither these kings nor even the Vṛṣṇis, who enjoy your intimate association, know you as the soul of all existence, the force of time and the supreme controller. For them you are covered by the curtain of māyā.

COMMENTARY: Who are we, so far from you? Those who are near you, even the kings, and even the Vṛṣṇis, who take you as their only pleasure, also do not know you as Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa. They cannot realize the real extent of your greatness. “What is the cause of their not realizing me, filled with all powers, since I remain in a manifested form?” You are covered by māyā. “How can it cover all my powers?” It is a screen: those who are your intimate associates can realize your greatness by your desire. They describe his greatness. You are Brahman (ātmanam). You impel all beings (kalayati – kālam) as antaryāmī. You are Svayam Bhagavān (īśvaram).

Text 84.24–25

yathā śayānaḥ puruṣa ātmānaṁ guṇa-tattva-dṛk
nāma-mātrendriyābhātaṁ na veda rahitaṁ param
evaṁ tvā nāma-mātreṣu viṣayeṣv indriyehayā
māyayā vibhramac-citto na veda smṛty-upaplavāt

A sleeping person imagines an alternative reality for himself and, seeing himself as having various names and forms, forgets his waking identity, which is distinct from the dream. Similarly, the senses of one whose consciousness is bewildered by illusion perceive only the names and forms of material objects. Thus such a person loses his memory and cannot know you.

COMMENTARY: Others do not know you at all. Two verses explain.

However, verses 22 onwards can be explained in another way. How does the Lord act is this way? He is not covered by māyā. We offer respects to the Lord who is not covered (acchanna) by his extraordinary āvaraṇa-śakti (material māyā), since he manifests unlimited powers. Or, we offer respects to the Lord who covers his powers by his mercy (māyayā) so that he can have intimate relationships (yoga) with his devotees (sva). Therefore he is most dear to all (paramātmane). The persons present at this place are more fortunate than us. That is explained in verse 23. Those who have gathered here and the intimate Vṛṣṇis who are superior to the others, do not see the Lord as covered by a screen of māyā. Rather they see him uncovered, because he manifests his svarūpa to them. Realizing his uncovered form, they do not see his form as impersonal Brahman (ātmānam). Surpassing that, realizing his personal form, they do not even see his form as Paramātmā (kālam). Surpassing that, realizing the form of Bhagavān, the source of all other forms, they do not see his form as the Supreme Lord. Surpassing all those realizations of bliss in those forms one after the other, they realize him as the lord of his affectionate friends.

itthaṁ satāṁ brahma-sukhānubhūtyā
dāsyaṁ gatānāṁ para-daivatena
māyāśritānāṁ nara-dārakeṇa
sākaṁ vijahruḥ kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ

In this way with an abundance of splendor caused by Kṛṣṇa, they played with him, though he is pure consciousness or happiness known as Brahman for the jñānīs, the Supreme Lord for the devotees with dāsya-bhāva and an ordinary human child for those covered by material illusion. SB 10.12.11

rājan patir gurur alaṁ bhavatāṁ yadūnāṁ
daivaṁ priyaḥ kula-patiḥ kva ca kiṅkaro vaḥ
astv evam aṅga bhagavān bhajatāṁ mukundo
muktiṁ dadāti karhicit sma na bhakti-yogam

O King Parīkṣit! Kṛṣṇa was the protector, instructor, object of worship, giver of affection, and the protector of both the Yadus and Pāṇḍavas. But he was sometimes your servant. The Lord gives liberation but rarely bhāva-bhakti to those who worship him. SB 5.6.18

Then verses 24 and 25 give an example. The person who experiences in waking or dreaming state various objects (guṇa-tattva-dṛk) gradually surpasses those experiences, and enters deep sleep (śayānaḥ). In that condition he does not know himself by names such as Devadatta, or is not made visible by the experience of his senses. Rather he knows his pure form of happiness (param), devoid of all of this (rahityam). The person bewildered by māyā does not know you (verse 26). The person is bewildered by māyā through actions of the senses in perceiving objects and names, because of a meager memory. Or, though the person is in deep sleep, one person among the Vṛṣṇis knows you as you are (yathā), not as something else (rahitam param). He directly realizes the eternal nature of your qualities like compassion—completely dispersed (ābhātam) into various names and objects. For these devotees, deep sleep is samādhi on the Lord.

śayyāsanāṭanālāpa- krīḍā-snānādi-karmasu
na viduḥ santam ātmānaṁ vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-cetasaḥ

The Vṛṣṇis were so absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness that they forgot their own bodies while sleeping, sitting, walking, conversing, playing, bathing and so on. SB 10.90.47

Or, they know the form of Śyāmasundara, revealed by their senses, defined by names like Kṛṣṇa (nāma-mātreṇa) and not devoid of these (rahitam)—they did not know him as impersonal Brahman.

Verse 25 concludes. All these people do not become not bewildered in heart about you by the form of māyā, by actions of the senses upon objects with various names, because of inundation with smṛti scriptures concerning dharma, but know you. They realize you. Another version evaṁ

tvā nāma-mātreṣu viṣayeṣv indreyehayā is not accepted by Śrīdhara Svāmī. He accepts the versions evaṁ tv ayaṁ jano brahman nāma-mātrenendriyehayā since he explains objects as equivalent to a dream.

Text 84.26

tasyādya te dadṛśimāṅghrim aghaugha-marṣa-
tīrthāspadaṁ hṛdi kṛtaṁ su-vipakva-yogaiḥ
utsikta-bhakty-upahatāśaya jīva-kośā
āpur bhavad-gatim athānugṛhāna bhaktān

Today we have directly seen your feet, the source of the holy Ganges, which washes away volumes of sins. Perfected yogīs can at best meditate upon your feet within their hearts. But only those who render you wholehearted devotional service and, in this way vanquish the soul's covering—the material mind—attain you as their final destination. Therefore kindly show mercy to us, your devotees.

COMMENTARY: The sages conclude. Today we have seen the feet of you who are rarely realized. Today our lives have become successful since those feet are the highest sādhana (method of attainment) and sādhya (attainment). This is explained by two descriptive phrases. Your feet are the origin of the holy Gaṅgā which destroys a host of sins which make persons inimical to your bhakti. The most mature yogīs and ātmārāmas place those feet in their hearts. "Do you not criticize the realization of the ātmārāma and praise bhakti?" Bhakti destroys the material mind simply by devotion. Another version has apahṛta instead of apahata, but the meaning is the same. Those who have destroyed the coverings on the jīva by intense bhakti, attain you. Making them devotees, be merciful to them, so that they can constantly see you.

Text 84.27

śrī-śuka uvāca
ity anujñāpya dāśārhaṁ dhṛtarāṣṭraṁ yudhiṣṭhiram
rājarṣe svāśramān gantuṁ munayo dadhire manaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus spoken, O wise king, the sages then took permission from Kṛṣṇa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Yudhiṣṭhira and prepared to

depart for their abodes.

COMMENTARY: Saying this special information, they then asked permission to depart from Svayam Bhagavān who had appeared in the Dāśārha family, from Dhṛtarāṣṭṛa and from Yudhiṣṭhira. Dhṛtarāṣṭra is mentioned because he was sitting there among them, was blind, was the younger brother of Vyāsa, and made them remember Yudhiṣṭhira. The sages desired to return home, to teach bhakti to their disciples and followers in their āśramas, according to the desire of the Lord. O sage among kings! You know such desires.

Text 84.28

tad vīkṣya tān upavrajya vasudevo mahā-yaśāḥ
praṇamya copasaṅgṛhya babhāṣedaṁ su-yantritaḥ

Seeing that they were about to leave, the renowned Vasudeva approached the sages. After bowing down to them and touching their feet, he spoke to them with carefully chosen words.

COMMENTARY: Knowing the intention of the sages to leave (tat vīkṣya), Vasudeva, famous because he was the father of the Lord, went to them. Following human pastimes like the Lord, he offered respects and spoke with the greatest courtesy (suyantritaḥ) in order to give bliss to Kṛṣna and the people, by crediting to the Lord his proper fame.

Text 84.29

śrī-vasudeva uvāca
namo vaḥ sarva-devebhya ṛṣayaḥ śrotum arhatha
karmaṇā karma-nirhāro yathā syān nas tad ucyatām

Śrī Vasudeva said: Obeisances to you, the residence of all the devatās. Please hear me, O sages. Kindly tell us how karma can be counteracted by further activities.

COMMENTARY: Though he knew the answer, he asked the sages in order to protect codes of respect by taking proof from persons qualified to teach.

Text 84.30

śrī-nārada uvāca
nāti-citram idaṁ viprā vasudevo bubhutsayā
kṛṣṇam matvārbhakaṁ yan naḥ pṛcchati śreya ātmanaḥ

Śrī Nārada Muni said: O brāhmaṇas, it is not so amazing that in his eagerness to know, Vasudeva has asked us about his ultimate benefit, for he considers Kṛṣṇa a mere boy.

COMMENTARY: "Why does Kṛṣṇa's father, who has attained good fortune desired by us, but which is hard to attain, ask about something other than Kṛṣṇa? If he asks, how can he give up Kṛṣṇa and ask someone else?" Astonished, the sages were silent. Though knowing Vasudeva's intention which was previously explained, Nārada spoke as if intolerant of Vasudeva's question. Since Vasudeva was well versed in Kṛṣṇa's powers, and knew the path of the highest good, unlike Nanda who was absorbed in Kṛṣṇa's sweetness, asking this question was part of his human pastimes in order to spread his son's sattvika glories. That question was very insignificant for the Lord who possessed the highest glories.

Or, Svayam Bhagavān reveals his pastimes to hide his power to some degree. This may however produce some misunderstanding. If we tolerate this, people will become bewildered. Therefore it is suitable that I show the Lord's powers, on the pretext of criticizing Vasudeva. He speaks in four verses (30-33). In the first two verses, he criticizes Vasudeva for bewildering people. In the second two verses, he praises Kṛṣṇa as the height of human goals and knowledge. Vasudeva considered Kṛṣṇa to be a material son (arbhakam) and asked about another means to attain the highest goal. Giving up Kṛṣṇa who is beside him, Vasudeva asked us.

Text 84.31

sannikarṣo 'tra martyānām anādaraṇa-kāraṇam
gāṅgaṁ hitvā yathānyāmbhas tatratyo yāti śuddhaye

In this world, familiarity breeds contempt. For example, one who lives on the banks of the Ganges might travel to some other body of water to be purified.

COMMENTARY: The reason for Vasudeva's conduct is as follows. Instead of atra the word hi is also seen. Sometimes this verse is placed before the

previous verse. Vasudeva acts like a normal human being in his pastimes and thus shows familiarity and lack of respect. Rejecting Gaṅgā water one goes to the water of another holy place for purification.

Text 84.32–33

yasyānubhūtiḥ kālena layotpatty-ādināsya vai
svato 'nyasmāc ca guṇato na kutaścana riṣyati
taṁ kleśa-karma-paripāka-guṇa-pravāhair
avyāhatānubhavam īśvaram advitīyam
prāṇādibhiḥ sva-vibhavair upagūḍham anyo
manyeta sūryam iva megha-himoparāgaiḥ

The Supreme Lord's awareness is never disturbed by time, by the creation and destruction of the universe, by changes in its own qualities, or by anything else, whether self-caused or external. But although the consciousness of the Lord, who is the supreme one without a second, is never affected by material distress, by the reactions of material work or by the constant flow of nature's modes, ordinary persons nonetheless think that the Lord is covered by his own creations of prāṇa and other material elements, just as one may think that the sun is covered by clouds, snow or an eclipse.

COMMENTARY: The Lord's awareness and manifesting power (anubhūtiḥ) when he is the doer and object of action are not destroyed by creation and destruction of the universe (asya), by time (which causes destruction of the universe), by itself (like lightning which appears and disappears on its own), by something else like the blow of a hammer to a pot, or by qualities being destroyed and changing to other qualities, as in a body. The awareness and powers are eternally existent.

The next verse states the opposite condition of the Lord. Kṛṣṇa is without a second (advitīyam) since he alone is Svayam Bhagavān. The descriptive terms are in order of increasing excellence in human terms. Yet ordinary people think he is covered by prāṇas and suffering because of the suffering and prāṇas seen in their associates. Because they suffer, they think Kṛṣṇa is similar to themselves, since everyone thinks in terms of themselves. The sun is king of the planets but seems to be covered by Rāhu. The Lord's powers are never affected since he does not suffer like the persons present

at that place. He is completely independent (īśvaram) because his knowledge is dependent on himself. He is Kṛṣṇa, without compare (advitīyam) because he alone manifests everything else. Another person thinks the Lord has limited knowledge because of his vibhava (his various forms) and his senses (prāṇa) and his limbs (ādibhiḥ), just as the sun is covered by clouds, snow or an eclipse.

The meaning is this. The sun appears to be limited in form by clouds or the eclipse. That is suitable since the cloud is a transformation of vapors of water pulled up by rays of the sun. Snow is also a conglomeration of particles of water pulled up by the sun. Rāhu, the cause of the eclipse, is the form of darkness which is dependent on the sun. The Lord's eyes and other senses are not like that, but are part of his svarūpa or vibhava. Therefore the Lord's senses and limbs cannot cover the Lord's knowledge. Similarly, the sun cannot be covered by warmth, etc., produced from its svarūpa. Rather the sun is revealed by them. His svarūpa is not covered by time or place, and his knowledge is not covered since his eyes and limbs are also similar to his svarūpa. However, low people will think the opposite. It is said na cāntar na bahir yasya: he has no interior or exterior. SB 10.9.13

nātaḥ paraṁ parama yad bhavataḥ svarūpam
ānanda-mātram avikalpam aviddha-varcaḥ

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, is the cause of all causes. He is past, present and future, and he is movable and immovable. (SB 3.9.3)

yo 'nādṛto naraka-bhāgbhir asat-prasaṅgaiḥ: those who are destined to be dispatched to the path of hell neglect your personal form because of speculating on material topics. SB 3.9.4

ye tu tvadīya-caraṇāmbuja-kośa-gandhaṁ
jighranti karṇa-vivaraiḥ śruti-vāta-nītam
bhaktyā gṛhīta-caraṇaḥ parayā ca teṣāṁ
nāpaiṣi nātha hṛdayāmburuhāt sva-puṁsām

O master! You do not give up the lotus hearts of your devotees who smell through their ears the fragrance of your lotus bud feet brought by the wind of the Vedas, and take your lotus feet as the greatest treasure through prema-bhakti. SB 3.9.5

Text 84.34

athocur munayo rājann ābhāṣyānakadundabhim
sarveṣāṁ śṛṇvatāṁ rājñāṁ tathaivācyuta-rāmayoḥ

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] The sages then spoke again, O King, addressing Vasudeva while all the kings, along with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, listened.

COMMENTARY: After this, understanding the intentions of Vasudeva and Nārada, to harmonize their intentions, the sages spoke. In verse 41 they resolve Nārada's statements. They addressed Vasudeva saying, "O crest jewel of success! O most worthy of worship!" The genitive case (sarveṣāṁ śṛṇvatāṁ rājñāṁ) is used to express the locative case, since they spoke to instruct the kings. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma listened, since they were present, to approve their words.

Text 84.35

karmaṇā karma-nirhāra eṣa sādhu-nirūpitaḥ
yac chraddhayā yajed viṣṇuṁ sarva-yajñeśvaraṁ makhaiḥ

[The sages said:] It has been definitely concluded that karma is counteracted by further activities of executing Vedic sacrifices as means of worshipping Kṛṣṇa, the giver of results for all sacrifices, with sincere faith.

COMMENTARY: It is concluded rightly by persons knowing scriptures that actions performed are counteracted by actions. One should with faith worship Svayam Bhagavān who spreads throughout the universe with his glory by means of all sacrifices. The reason to worship Kṛṣṇa alone in sacrifices is that he gives all results of sacrifices (sarva-yajñeśvaram) since he is the Lord of all devatās. Without worshipping him even niṣkāma sacrifices are useless.

naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitaṁ
na śobhate jñānam alaṁ nirañjanam
kutaḥ punaḥ śaśvad abhadram īśvare
na cārpitaṁ karma yad apy akāraṇam

Even the stage of jñāna without the bondage of karma is not glorious if it is devoid of bhakti to the Supreme Lord. What is the use of having destroyed ignorance? What then to speak of sakāma-karma which causes suffering, both during practice and at the stage perfection, and niṣkāma-karma, when not offered to the Lord? SB 1.5.12

If he is worshipped, then one achieves desired results. However, your son is to be worshipped by another method (not sacrifice).

Text 84.36

cittasyopaśamo 'yaṁ vai kavibhiḥ śāstra-cakṣusā
darśitaḥ su-gamo yogo dharmaś cātma-mud-āvahaḥ

Learned authorities who see through the eye of scripture have demonstrated that this is the easiest method of fixing the mind on the Lord and that it is a method which brings joy to the heart.

COMMENTARY: The excellence of the method is explained. The method of reduction of karma (ayam) produces intelligence fixed on the Lord (śama) to the highest degree (upa). śamo man-niṣṭhatā buddher: śama means fixing the intelligence on the Lord. (SB 11.19.36) This is moreover a process easy to perform. All sacrifices become successful, since success is achieved simply by a saṅkalpa dedicated to the Lord. It is not difficult to achieve like trying to follow the eight parts of yoga. This is the principal dharma since it gives shelter to all dharmas, since this dharma enters all other dharmas. Because it is always filled with the presence of the Lord, it brings joy to the ātmā. It is not like other dharmas filled with lust, that make envy and greed appear in the heart. Therefore this process is revealed by the knowers of scripture, while revealing the meaning of scriptures which are like eyes.

Text 84.37

ayaṁ svasty-ayanaḥ panthā dvi-jāter gṛha-medhinaḥ
yac chraddhayāpta-vittena śuklenejyeta pūruṣaḥ

This is the most auspicious path for a religious householder of the twice-born orders—to selflessly worship the Lord with wealth honestly obtained.

COMMENTARY: The method is further described. This method is auspicious for the household āśrama, since it pleases the Lord by surrender in the form of offering wealth to the Lord and since the twice-born householder is not qualified for anything except artha, dharma and kāma. His wealth should be obtained according to his talents in a just manner. Viṣṇu-dharma describes the pure occupation:

pratigraheṇa yal labdhaṁ yājyataḥ śiṣyatas tathā
guṇānvitebhyo viprasya śuklaṁ tat trividhaṁ smṛtam
yuddhopalabdhaṁ kāraś ca daṇḍaś ca vyavahārataḥ
kṣatriyasya dhanaṁ śuklaṁ trividhaṁ parikīrtitam
kṛṣi-vāṇijya-gorakṣāḥ kṛtvā śuklaṁ tathā viśaḥ
dvija-śuśrūṣayā labdhaṁ śuklaṁ śūdrasya kīrtitam
kramāgataṁ prīti-dāyaṁ prāptaṁ ca saha-bhāryayā
aviśeṣeṇa sarveṣām dhanaṁ śukle prakīrtitam
śuklena vittena kṛtaṁ puṇyaṁ bahu-phalaṁ bhavet

The brāhmaṇa earns wealth purely from gifts, from performing sacrifice and from teaching, received from persons with good qualities. The kṣatriya earns wealth purely by fighting, receiving taxes, punishment and administering justice. The vaiśya earns purely by farming, selling and herding cows. The śūdra earns purely by serving the brāhmaṇas, kṣatriya and vaiśyas. Money obtained when getting married, given with affection, and at the proper time, is considered pure for all castes. Performing pious acts with pure wealth produces great results.

“If one worships the Lord, he should be worshipped by the nine main types of bhakti or by menial service to the deity and arcana. Is performing sacrifices (which householders perform) a secondary aṅga of bhakti?” This method is for a person attached to household life (gṛha-medhinaḥ). This method is taught because the person lacks complete faith, or only to teach the common people.

Text 84.38

vittaiṣaṇāṁ yajña-dānair gṛhair dāra-sutaiṣaṇām
ātma-lokaiṣaṇāṁ deva kālena visṛjed budhaḥ
grāme tyaktaiṣaṇāḥ sarve yayur dhīrās tapo-vanam

An intelligent person should learn to renounce his desire for wealth by performing sacrifices and acts of charity. He should learn to renounce his desire for wife and children by experiencing family life. And he should learn to renounce his desire for promotion to a higher planet in his next life, O saintly Vasudeva, by studying the effects of time. Self-controlled sages who have thus renounced their attachment to household life go to the forest to perform austerities.

COMMENTARY: By offering various objects to the Lord, by his mercy, one gives up desire for the objects. One gives up the desire for wealth by performing sacrifices whose actions exhaust wealth for the purpose of worship of the Lord. One gives up desire for wife and sons, by household life with wife and children meant as a worship of the Lord. One should give up the desire for selfish reasons or for enjoyment in this life and the next at all opportunities (kālena), looking for opportunities to worship the Lord, using time for the Lord. O Lord (deva)! Or one should give up desires for enjoyment in this life and the next by spending time in worshipping the Lord (deva).

The person with discrimination should give up these desires. This means the wealthy householder will not perfect hearing and other devotional processes properly by having a disturbed mind. If the attached person suddenly gives up his house without destroying desires for the gṛhastha-āśrama, he cannot perfect hearing and meditation on the Lord. He will later give them up.

Text 84.39

ṛṇais tribhir dvijo jāto devarṣi-pitṝṇāṁ prabho
yajñādhyayana-putrais tāny anistīrya tyajan patet

O Lord, a member of the twice-born classes is born with three kinds of debts—those owed to the devatās, to the sages and to his forefathers. If he leaves his body without first liquidating these debts by performing sacrifices, studying the scriptures and begetting children, he will fall down into a hellish condition.

COMMENTARY: O Lord, capable of relieving us of all debts (prabho)! The incapable person should not be found faulty. One version has pitṛnām. The

short ṛ is poetic license. Without liquidating his debts to the devatās (tān or tāni) he encounters great obstracles (patet) in this life and the next. Therefore Manu says vrajati adhaḥ: one should leave the house after this is accomplished. Taking shelter of the Lord is not forbidden at this time. There is no fault in worshipping the Lord even if one has debts.

devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇāṁ pitṝṇāṁ
na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇī ca rājan
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇaṁ śaraṇyaṁ
gato mukundaṁ parihṛtya kartam

O King! One who has given up all varṇāśrama duties and has taken full shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, who offers shelter to all, is not a debtor to or servant of the devatās, great sages, ordinary living beings, relatives or Pitṛs. SB 11.5.41

Text 84.40

tvaṁ tv adya mukto dvābhyāṁ vai ṛṣi-pitror mahā-mate
yajñair devarṇam unmucya nirṛṇo 'śaraṇo bhava

But you, O magnanimous soul, are already free from two of your debts—those to the sages and the forefathers. Now absolve yourself of your debt to the devatās by executing Vedic sacrifices, and in this way free yourself completely of debt and renounce all material shelter.

COMMENTARY: The word tu indicates Vasudeva in particular. You are certainly (vai) free from debts to Pitṛs and sages. Become completely free (un-mucya) of the three debts and become houseless. Renounce for the sake of Viṣṇu.

Text 84.41

vasudeva bhavān nūnaṁ bhaktyā paramayā harim
jagatām īśvaraṁ prārcaḥ sa yad vāṁ putratāṁ gataḥ

O Vasudeva, without doubt you must have previously worshiped the Lord, the master of all worlds. Both you and your wife must have perfectly worshiped him with supreme devotion, since he has accepted the role of your son.

COMMENTARY:

Having described the process for persons who have not developed faith in bhakti, now they say that Vasudeva has been most successful from the beginning. O Vasudeva! Vasudeva means he who performs pastimes (deva) with a wealth (vasu) of bhakti for the Lord. They then show how this is true. Certainly you worshipped excellently (pra-arcaḥ) the Lord—as your son—by which you brought him under control. The Lord takes away all suffering (harim), since he is the Lord of all devatās and others (jagatām īśvaram). Therefore you have finished repaying all debts and are to be worshipped by all liberated souls and devotees. With another intention you have asked about this.

The relief from debt is stated according to his imitation of human pastimes, not according to his eternal position (in which he has no debts). This is indicated by the word Vasudeva itself. Vasudeva refers to the internal śakti of the Lord called śuddha-sattva. It is said in the Fourth Canto: sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ vasudeva-śabditaṁ: śuddha-sattva is called vasudeva. (SB 4.3.23)

Text 84.42

śrī-śuka uvāca
iti tad-vacanaṁ śrutvā vasudevo mahā-manāḥ
tān ṛṣīn ṛtvijo vavre mūrdhnānamya prasādya ca

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After hearing these statements of the sages, generous Vasudeva bowed his head to the ground and, praising them, requested them to become his priests.

COMMENTARY: Hearing their words which included his hidden intentions, understanding those words (mahā-manāh) he offered respects.

Text 84.43

ta enam ṛṣayo rājan vṛtā dharmeṇa dhārmikam
tasminn ayājayan kṣetre makhair uttama-kalpakaiḥ

Thus requested by him, O King, the sages engaged the pious Vasudeva in performing fire sacrifices at that holy place of Kurukṣetra according to dharma and with most excellent ritual arrangements.

COMMENTARY: The sages engaged Vasudeva correctly, according to the rules of scripture (dharmena), since the brāhmaṇas should direct the kṣatriyas in performance of sacrifice. Or, the brāhmaṇas appointed for the purpose of dharma, engaged Vasudeva, dedicated to bhagavad-dharma (dhārmikam), in sacrifice using the chief rules, since they possessed all ability.

Text 84.44–45

tad-dīkṣāyāṁ pravṛttāyāṁ vṛṣṇayaḥ puṣkara-srajaḥ
snātāḥ su-vāsaso rājan rājānaḥ suṣṭhv-alaṅkṛtāḥ
tan-mahiṣyaś ca muditā niṣka-kaṇṭhyaḥ su-vāsasaḥ
dīkṣā-śālām upājagmur āliptā vastu-pāṇayaḥ

When Mahārāja Vasudeva was about to be initiated for the sacrifice, O King, the Vṛṣṇis came to the initiation pavilion after bathing and putting on fine clothes and garlands of lotuses. The other kings also came, elaborately ornamented, as well as all Vasudeva's joyful queens, who wore jeweled lockets around their necks and were also clad in fine garments. The royal wives were anointed with sandalwood paste and carried auspicious items for the worship.

COMMENTARY: The Vṛṣṇis and other kings participated. O King! These kings had good fortune! Addressing the king also indicates Śukadeva's great joy. Vasudeva's wives (tad-mahiṣyaḥ) were joyful. The word ca indicates that the Vṛṣṇis and others were similarly joyful. They came close (upa-ājagmuḥ) to the dīkṣa arena.

Text 84.46

nedur mṛdaṅga-paṭaha-śaṅkha-bhery-ānakādayaḥ
nanṛtur naṭa-nartakyas tuṣṭuvuḥ sūta-māgadhāḥ
jaguḥ su-kaṇṭhyo gandharvyaḥ saṅgītaṁ saha-bhartṛkāḥ

Mṛdaṅgas, paṭahas, conchs, bherīs, ānakas and other instruments resounded, male and female dancers danced, and sūtas and māgadhas recited glorifications. Sweet-voiced Gandharvīs sang, accompanied by their husbands.

COMMENTARY: Sūtas, māgadas and women who were singers of the Gandharva species sang.

Text 84.47

tam abhyaṣiñcan vidhi-vad aktam abhyaktam ṛtvijaḥ
patnībhir aṣṭā-daśabhiḥ soma-rājam ivoḍubhiḥ

After Vasudeva's eyes had been decorated with black cosmetic and his body smeared with fresh butter, the priests initiated him according to scriptural rules by sprinkling him and his eighteen wives with sacred water. He resembled the regal moon encircled by stars.

COMMENTARY: He was like the moon, king of soma. The word "king" is used to indicate the glory of the sacrifice. The sacrifice was like that rājasūya sacrifice in grandeur. Though there are many somas (moons), among them, one will be the king. He is compared to the king among moons. The other kings are compared to stars. He had twenty-eight wives, but only eighteen participated because twenty-eight was too many. Hari-vaṁśa describes his birth:

manuṣya-loke kṛtsne 'pi rūpe nāsti samo bhuvi
yasyāsīt puruṣāgryasya kāntiś candramaso yathā

One could not compare his beauty with that of any human beings on earth. The beauty of the best of men was like the moonlight.

Here also he was incomparable.

Text 84.48

tābhir dukūla-valayair hāra-nūpura-kuṇḍalaiḥ
sv-alaṅkṛtābhir vibabhau dīkṣito 'jina-saṁvṛtaḥ

Vasudeva received initiation along with his wives, who wore silk sārīs and were adorned with bangles, necklaces, ankle bells and earrings. With his body wrapped in deerskin, Vasudeva shone splendidly.

COMMENTARY: Vasudeva shone splendidly (vibabhau).

Text 84.49

tasyartvijo mahā-rāja ratna-kauśeya-vāsasaḥ
sa-sadasyā virejus te yathā vṛtra-haṇo ’dhvare

My dear Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Vasudeva’s priests and the officiating members of the assembly, dressed in silk dhotīs and jeweled ornaments, looked so effulgent that they seemed to be standing in the sacrificial arena of Indra, the killer of Vṛtra.

COMMENTARY: One version has pīta-kauśeya-vāsasaḥ. They were dressed in new cloth similar to the Lord’s. The other version has ratna-kauśeya-vāsasaḥ: they were dressed in cloth with gems hanging at the edges. The simile is used to indicate that just on seeing this, one would become astonished.

Text 84.50

tadā rāmaś ca kṛṣṇaś ca svaiḥ svair bandhubhir anvitau
rejatuḥ sva-sutair dārair jīveśau sva-vibhūtibhiḥ

At that time Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the Lords of all living entities, shone forth with great majesty in the company of their respective sons, wives and other family members, who were their expansions.

COMMENTARY: The two lords of the living entities (jīveśau), like princes or controllers of the population, shone with their intimate expansions–with their cousins (sva-bandhubhiḥ), with their wives, and with their sons who were non-different from them in form and qualities (sva-sutaiḥ). They were part of themselves. Or, the two were, in their expansions as Paramātmā, the antaryāmīs of all the jīvas. It is said in the Eleventh canto kālo māyā-maye jīve jīva ātmani mayy aje: time merges into Saṅkarṣaṇa, and he merges into me. (SB 11.24.27) The Lord is superior to antaryāmī. He is Svayam Bhagavān.

Text 84.51

īje ’nu-yajñaṁ vidhinā agni-hotrādi-lakṣaṇaiḥ
prākṛtair vaikṛtair yajñair dravya-jñāna-kriyeśvaram

Performing various kinds of Vedic sacrifice according to the proper regulations, Vasudeva worshiped the Lord of all sacrificial paraphernalia, mantras and rituals. He executed both primary and secondary sacrifices,

offering oblations to the sacred fire and carrying out other aspects of sacrificial worship.

COMMENTARY: He worshipped the Lord according to rules pertaining to sacrifice (anu-yajñam). The rules are described. He worshipped the Lord of materials, mantras and ritual acts, Bhagavān, since he alone should be worshipped.

Text 84.52

athartvigbhyo 'dadāt kale yathāmnātaṁ sa dakṣiṇāḥ
sv-alaṅkṛtebhyo 'laṅkṛtya go-bhū-kanyā mahā-dhanāḥ

Then, at the appropriate time and according to scripture, Vasudeva remunerated the priests by decorating them with precious ornaments, though they were already richly adorned, and offering them valuable gifts of gems, cows, land and marriageable girls.

COMMENTARY: After the sacrifice (atha), he decorated the priests with ornaments and gave them donations consisting of great gems, and gold, land, cows and girls.

Text 84.53

patnī-saṁyājāvabhṛthyaiś caritvā te maharṣayaḥ
sasnū rāma-hrade viprā yajamāna-puraḥ-sarāḥ

After supervising the patnī-saṁyāja and avabhṛthya rituals, the great brāhmaṇa sages bathed in Paraśurāma's lake with the sponsor of the sacrifice, Vasudeva, who led them.

COMMENTARY: The sages and others performed the avabhṛthya bath (sasnūḥ).

Text 84.54

snāto 'laṅkāra-vāsāṁsi vandibhyo 'dāt tathā striyaḥ
tataḥ sv-alaṅkṛto varṇān ā-śvabhyo 'nnena pūjayat

His sacred bath complete, Vasudeva joined with his wives in giving the jewelry and clothes they had been wearing to the professional reciters. Vasudeva then put on new garments, after which he honored all classes of people by feeding everyone, even the dogs.

COMMENTARY: Vasudeva's queens gave cloth and ornaments to the reciters. Instead of snataḥ alaṅkara sometimes nānālaṅkara is seen. They worshipped the various castes and others down to the dogeaters, by offering food.

Text 84.55–56

bandhūn sa-dārān sa-sutān pāribarheṇa bhūyasā
vidarbha-kośala-kurūn kāśi-kekaya-sṛñjayān
sadasyartvik-sura-gaṇān nṛ-bhūta-pitṛ-cāraṇān
śrī-niketam anujñāpya śaṁsantaḥ prayayuḥ kratum

With opulent gifts he honored his relatives, including all their wives and children; the royalty of the Vidarbha, Kosala, Kuru, Kāśī, Kekaya and Sṛñjaya kingdoms; the officiating members of the assembly; and also the priests, witnessing devatās, humans, spirits, forefathers and Cāraṇas. Then, taking permission from Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of the goddess of fortune, the various guests departed as they all chanted the glories of Vasudeva's sacrifice.

COMMENTARY: He worshiped the Yadus (bandhūn) and the kings of various provinces. He also worshiped all men (nara), Pramathas (bhūta), and devatās. This indicates that all these persons also came to the sacrifice. All were satisfied with the sacrifice by its execution with all its parts and its beauty. Thus, they took permission from the Lord and departed.

Text 84.57–58

dhṛtarāṣṭro 'nujaḥ pārthā bhīṣmo droṇaḥ pṛthā yamau
nārado bhagavān vyāsaḥ suhṛt-sambandhi-bāndhavāḥ
bandhūn pariṣvajya yadūn sauhṛdāklinna-cetasaḥ
yayur viraha-kṛcchreṇa sva-deśāṁś cāpare janāḥ

The Yadus were all embraced by their friends, close family members and other relatives, including Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his younger brother, Vidura; Pṛthā and her sons; Bhīṣma; Droṇa; the twins Nakula and Sahadeva; Nārada; and Vedavyāsa. Their hearts melting with affection, these and the other guests left for their kingdoms, their progress slowed by the pain of separation.

COMMENTARY: Friends, relatives and others embraced the Yādavas. Pained by the separation they departed. Others (Duryodhana, etc.) however were indifferent.

Text 84.59

nandas tu saha gopālair bṛhatyā pūjayārcitaḥ
kṛṣṇa-rāmograsenādyair nyavātsīd bandhu-vatsalaḥ

Nanda Mahārāja showed his affection for his relatives, the Yadus, by remaining with them a little longer, together with his cowherds. During his stay, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Ugrasena and the others honored him with especially profuse worship.

COMMENTARY: When all others had departed by the Lord's arrangement, Kṛṣṇa then stayed for a long time in Kurukṣetra with the people of Vraja without any feeling of restriction. The word tu distinguishes Nanda from all the others at Kurukṣetra. Therefore, Nanda was worshiped with valuable articles of worship and remained there. Instead of bṛhatyā sometimes mahatā is seen. Nanda stayed because he had great affection for friends like Vasudeva, but even more affection for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. He was worshipped by Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Ugrasena and others like Vasudeva. Vasudeva is not separately mentioned because he had worshipped Nanda as part of the sacrifice previously.

Text 84.60

vasudevo 'ñjasottīrya manoratha-mahārṇavam
suhṛd-vṛtaḥ prīta-manā nandam āha kare spṛśan

Having so easily crossed over the vast ocean of his ambition, Vasudeva felt fully satisfied. In the company of his many well-wishers, he took Nanda by the hand and addressed him as follows.

COMMENTARY: After the death of Kaṁsa, Vasudeva had the desire that he along with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma should meet the people of Vraja somewhere and have a huge festival with all friends, sages and kings. He was now pleased to have crossed very easily over that great ocean—something hard to arrange. On another day, surrounded by friends, with all his brothers and elders, he went to Nanda's residence. Sitting on a seat,

facing Nanda and taking his hand in affection, he spoke to him. He had come to pacify Nanda at the upcoming suffering at the time of separating from Kṛṣṇa.

Text 84.61

śrī-vasudeva uvāca
bhrātar īśa-kṛtaḥ pāśo nṛnāṁ yaḥ sneha-saṁjñitaḥ
taṁ dustyajam ahaṁ manye śūrāṇām api yoginām

Śrī Vasudeva said: My dear brother, God has tied the knot called affection, which tightly binds human beings together. It seems to me that even great heroes and mystics find it very difficult to free themselves from it.

COMMENTARY: In four verses (61-64) Vasudeva indicates that they are all dependent on Nanda. He addresses Nanda as a brother. Since we are brothers there is no difference in how we see our children. Since affection is created by the Lord it is difficult to overcome.

Text 84.62

asmāsv apratikalpeyaṁ yat kṛtājñeṣu sattamaiḥ
maitry arpitāphalā cāpi na nivarteta karhicit

The Supreme Lord must have created the bonds of affection, for such exalted saints as you have never stopped showing matchless friendship toward us ingrates, although it has never been properly reciprocated.

COMMENTARY: The Lord has created this bondage. “Why?” Vasudeva explains this by giving an example. You have never stopped showing us, and others related to us, causeless friendship, though we live far away and have committed offense to you. Or, the Lord has made mutual affection. Like tying two cows together, you are bound to me by that affection, though I do not maintain the relationship. That is most astonishing because I see a lack of mutual relationship in that association. Then he speaks this verse. To us who cannot show friendship with affection, you who are correct in conduct do not stop at any time the incomparable (aprati-kalpā) friendship offered with affection, without expectation, just for friendship, even though you could stop it.

Text 84.63

prāg akalpāc ca kuśalaṁ bhrātar vo nācarāma hi
adhunā śrī-madāndhākṣā na paśyāmaḥ puraḥ sataḥ

Previously, dear brother, we did nothing to benefit you because we were unable to, yet even now that you are present before us, our eyes are so blinded by the intoxication of material good fortune that we continue to ignore you.

COMMENTARY: We do not see you even though you are present in front of us. What to speak of when you are far away?

Text 84.64

mā rājya-śrīr abhūt puṁsaḥ śreyas-kāmasya māna-da
sva-janān uta bandhūn vā na paśyati yayāndha-dṛk

O most respectful one, may a person who wants the highest benefit in life never gain kingly wealth, for it leaves him blind to the needs of his own family and friends.

COMMENTARY: O Nanda who respects others (māna-da)! Even having wealth, you give respect to others. You deserve wealth.

Text 84.65

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ sauhṛda-śaithilya-citta ānakadundubhiḥ
ruroda tat-kṛtāṁ maitrīṁ smarann aśru-vilocanaḥ

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: His heart softened by feelings of intimate friendship, Vasudeva wept. His eyes brimmed with tears as he remembered the friendship Nanda had shown him.

COMMENTARY: Vasudeva's heart became softened with friendship naturally. He then remembered all of the friendly acts of Nanda.

Text 84.66

nandas tu sakhyuḥ priya-kṛt premṇā govinda-rāmayoḥ
adya śva iti māsāṁs trīn yadubhir mānito 'vasat

And on his part, Nanda was also full of affection for his friend Vasudeva. Thus during the following days Nanda would repeatedly announce, "I will be leaving later today" and "I will be leaving tomorrow." But out of love for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma he remained there for three more months, honored by all the Yadus.

COMMENTARY: Nanda did not reply to him since he knew Kṛṣṇa's bhāva and had no doubts about Kṛṣṇa being his son. Kṛṣṇa had said "I will return to see my relatives after making my friends happy." (SB 10.45.23) His integral affection is shown in Bhakti-rasāmṛṭa-sindhu:

devakyā vivṛta-prasū-caritayāpy unmṛjyamānānane
bhūyobhir vasudeva-nandanatayāpy udghūṣyamāṇe janaiḥ
govinde mihira-grahotsukatayā kṣetraṁ kuror āgate
premā vallava-nāthayor atitarām ullāsam evāyayau

When Kṛṣṇa went with an eager heart to Kurukṣetra to observe the solar eclipse, people glorified him as the son of Vasudeva. Devakī, performing activities suitable for a mother, wiped the tears from his face, while Nanda and Yaśodā's prema simply increased even more. BRS 3.4.57

"Would Nanda ask permission to leave?'' He was honored by Vasudeva and others. This increased daily and, in this way he stayed for three months, saying each day "I will go today or tomorrow" because of his firm prema for Kṛṣṇa and even for Balarāma who was his brother's son, since the two boys gave him great bliss. The word tu indicates that Nanda had greater love in his dealings with Vasudeva than Vasudeva had in dealings with him. Having affection for his friend Vasudeva, he stayed for three months. He did not indicate that Kṛṣṇa was his son and that he wanted to take him with him to Vraja.

Text 84.67–68

tataḥ kāmaiḥ pūryamāṇaḥ sa-vrajaḥ saha-bāndhavaḥ
parārdhyābharaṇa-kṣauma-nānānarghya-paricchadaiḥ
vasudevograsenābhyāṁ kṛṣṇoddhava-balādibhiḥ
dattam ādāya pāribarhaṁ yāpito yadubhir yayau

Then, after Vasudeva, Ugrasena, Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava, Balarāma and others had fulfilled his desires and presented him with precious ornaments, fine

linen and varieties of priceless household furnishings, Nanda Mahārāja accepted all these gifts and took his leave. Seen off by all the Yadus, he departed with his family members and the residents of Vraja.

COMMENTARY: After three months (tataḥ) Nanda went to the province of Mathurā. He went with the people of Vraja since they were all necessary for the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa there. He went because he expected Kṛṣṇa to come after he had killed the remaining enemies. "In what manner did he depart?" He was satisfied with all desirables given by Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Uddhava, Vasudeva, Ugrasena and the Yādavas. Though his real desires were not openly stated, he was completely satisfied by Kṛṣṇa's promise. The desire of everyone was that Kṛṣṇa would immediately return to Gokula. That is also indicated by the plural of kāmaiḥ. Yad-dhāmārtha-suhṛt-priyātma-tanaya-prāṇāśayās tvat-kṛte: so what is left for you to give these devotees of Vṛndāvana, whose homes, wealth, friends, dear relations, bodies, children and very lives and hearts are all dedicated only to you? SB 10.14.35

pṛṣṭāś cānāmayaṁ sveṣu prema-gadgadayā girā
kṛṣṇe kamala-patrākṣe sannyastākhila-rādhasaḥ

With voices faltering out of love for him, those cowherds, who had dedicated everything to lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, asked about the health of their dear ones [in Dvārakā], and Balarāma in turn asked about the cowherds' welfare. SB 10.65.6

They were dedicated solely to him, giving up everything else. Vasudeva and Ugrasena are mentioned first because they were best of the dynasty, being kings. Until this time, they had not arranged for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's return to Vraja because of the disturbances caused by battles. Now they could arrange this. In this way they satisfied the people of Vraja. Kṛṣṇa along with Balarāma had promised to return after killing Kaṁsa. Now the time had come. Uddhava had advised them that they should quickly go on some pretext and stay there forever. Consulting with Uddhava, the two agreed. Of course, the two also would reside eternally in Dvārakā where there is an acknowledgement of Kṛṣṇa's supreme position. Attention would be given to make this arrangement of returning to Vraja. Kṛṣṇa made a special arrangement for the gopīs. He himself as said in respect:

api smaratha naḥ sakhyaḥ svānām artha-cikīrṣayā
gatāṁś cirāyitāñ chatru-pakṣa-kṣapaṇa-cetasaḥ

My dear girīfriends, do you still remember me? It was for my relatives' sake that I stayed away so long, intent on destroying my enemies. SB 10.82.41

The destruction of enemies ended with the killing of Dantavakra. Vasudeva and others did not accept that even at this time Kṛṣṇa would go, since he had made them believe that he was absorbed in possessiveness of household life in Dvārakā.

Nanda was also respected (pūryamanaḥ) with unlimited ornaments and other articles given. Accepting with affection that unlimited wealth (pāribarham), he left while Vasudeva and others followed after them (yāpitaḥ) for some time.

Text 84.69

nando gopās' ca gopyaś ca govinda-caraṇāmbuje
manaḥ kṣiptaṁ punar hartum anīśā mathurāṁ yayuḥ

Unable to withdraw their minds from Govinda's lotus feet, Nanda and the cowherd men and women returned to Mathurā.

COMMENTARY: They were unable to withdraw their minds from Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet where they had placed them. They went with their bodies, but their minds remained with Kṛṣṇa. They went quickly to the province of Mathurā, with the conviction that Kṛṣṇa would keep his promise and come there. Instead of mathurām sometimes mathurān deśān is seen. They could not take their minds away from him until he returned. The two words ca indicate that all of them had this condition.

Text 84.70

bandhuṣu pratiyāteṣu vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-devatāḥ
vīkṣya prāvṛṣam āsannād yayur dvāravatīṁ punaḥ

Their relatives having thus departed, and seeing that the rainy season was approaching, the Vṛṣṇis, whose only Lord was Kṛṣṇa, went back to Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY: When their friends Nanda and others had gone back with conviction, the Vṛṣṇis could not stay in that place a moment longer, because on remembering the people of Vraja at that place, they felt intense separation. They could not stay in Kurukṣetra. They returned to Dvārakā because they had Kṛṣṇa as their deity. They followed his actions.

Text 84.71

janebhyaḥ kathayāṁ cakrur yadu-deva-mahotsavam
yad āsīt tīrtha-yātrāyāṁ suhṛt-sandarśanādikam

They told the people of the city about the festive sacrifices performed by Vasudeva, lord of the Yadus, and about everything else that had happened during their pilgrimage, especially how they had met with all their loved ones.

COMMENTARY: After this, according to what was explained previously, after killing Śālva and Dantavakra, the Lord returned to Gokula.

They related to the Vṛṣṇis who had remained in Dvārakā or to all people the huge festival and meeting with their friends, the people of Vraja. They also spoke of the kings and sages who gathered there (ādikam) as well as the glories of the Yadus and Kṛṣṇa, the great devotion of the queens for Kṛṣṇa, the intense affection of Nanda and others for Kṛṣṇa, and how Kṛṣṇa worshipped and consoled them.

I surrender to Kṛṣṇa who, after giving up Vraja, stayed a long time in Dvārakā because of duties, who, because he was disturbed, first sent Uddhava and Balarāṁa to console them directly and who, coming in person to Kurukṣetra, met them and out of mercy then quickly returned to Vraja.

Chapter Eighty-five

Lord Kṛṣṇa Instructs Vasudeva and Retrieves Devakī's Sons

Text 85.1

śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca
athaikadātmajau prāptau kṛta-pādābhivandanau
vasudevo 'bhinandyāha prītyā saṅkarṣaṇācyutau

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: One day the two sons of Vasudeva—Saṅkarṣaṇa and Acyuta—came to pay him respects, bowing down at his feet. Vasudeva greeted them with great affection and spoke to them.

COMMENTARY: Vasudeva had paternal feelings mixed with knowledge of the Lord's powers. His respect for the Lord's powers was stimulated by the words of the sages. Because of that, and still remembering the conversations filled with apparent jñāna when the Lord spoke to the gopīs, Śukadeva praises a particular incidental pastime.

After the trip to Kurukṣetra where Vasudeva received special instructions from the sages, one day in the morning Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma offered him respects, because they were his sons. He could not give up his feelings for them. He greeted them by offering blessings and then spoke with affection, satisfied internally that the two who were the Supreme Lords had appeared as his sons and were inseparable from showing powers and giving affection (saṅkarṣaṇācyutau). The satisfaction with their greatness became a cause of Kṛṣṇa destroying that conception later.

Text 85.2

munīnāṁ sa vacaḥ śrutvā putrayor dhāma-sūcakam
tad-vīryair jāta-viśrambhaḥ paribhāṣyābhyabhāṣata

Having heard the great sages' words concerning the power of his two sons, and having seen their valorous deeds, Vasudeva became convinced of their divinity. Thus, addressing them by name, he spoke to them as follows.

COMMENTARY: This verse shows the reason for this conception of greatness in his sons: he understood his sons' greatness through the words of the sages, confirming his previous realizations. He had that knowledge previously:

vidito 'si bhavān sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ
kevalānubhavānanda-svarūpaḥ sarva-buddhi-dṛk

I know you directly as the Supreme Person beyond material existence, as the impersonal Brahman, as Paramātmā and Bhagavān. SB 10.3.13

He always had faith in their powers. Now, hearing such words of the sages, he called out the names of his sons and spoke.

Text 85.3

kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-yogin saṅkarṣaṇa sanātana
jāne vām asya yat sākṣāt pradhāna-puruṣau parau

[Vasudeva said:] O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, best of yogīs, O eternal Saṅkarṣaṇa! I know that you two are personally the source of universal creation and the ingredients of creation as well.

COMMENTARY: O Svayam Bhagavān (kṛṣṇa)! He repeats that name for emphasis. O pervader of everything (mahā-yogin), the eternal shelter of the influence of yogamāyā! O Saṅkarṣaṇa, second expansion in Kṛṣṇa's vyūha, who are thus attracted by Kṛṣṇa, and was made his assistant in his prakaṭa pastimes. O eternal accomplished one (sanātana)! I am convinced that you two are situated beyond the pradhāna and puruṣa of the universe. You are beyond the upādhis of prakṛti and beyond the puruṣa who glances at prakṛti, and who is your aṁśa.

bhagavān eka āsedam agra ātmātmanāṁ vibhuḥ
ātmecchānugatāv ātmā nānā-maty-upalakṣaṇaḥ

Bhagavān, who exists in the form of Paramātmā and Brahman according to the viewpoint, alone existed before the creation of the universe, when the desire to create bodies of the jīvas was absent. SB 3.5.23

kāla-vṛttyā tu māyāyāṁ guṇa-mayyām adhokṣajaḥ
puruṣeṇātma-bhūtena vīryam ādhatta vīryavān

Bhagavān, lord of Mahā-vaikuṇṭha, in his svāṁśa expansion as the puruṣa, full of potency, at a certain moment of time, placed the jīvas into māyā which became agitated by the guṇas. SB 3.5.26

Because you are the root form as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, you are both Svayam Bhagavān (parau). You two are both directly the Supreme Lords.

Text 85.4

yatra yena yato yasya yasmai yad yad yathā yadā
syād idaṁ bhagavān sākṣāt pradhāna-puruṣeśvaraḥ

You are the Supreme Lords, who manifest as the Lord of both pradhāna and puruṣa [Mahā-Viṣṇu]. Everything that comes into existence, however and whenever it does so, is created within you, by you, from you, for you and in relation to you.

COMMENTARY: He shows how they are the root form. Saṅkarṣaṇa is included in Kṛṣṇa in this statement and thus the singular is used. Vasudeva praises Kṛṣṇa in three verses (4-7). Idam refers to Vaikuṇṭha made by the svarūpa-śakti, jīvas made of taṭastha-śakti and the universe made of bahiraṅga-śakti. Kṛṣṇa (bhagavān) within whom the spiritual world, material world and jīvas exist is directly the shelter (īśvaraḥ) of pradhāna and puruṣas mentioned, since Kṛṣṇa is the shelter of everything, being the root form. Yatra (in whom everything exists) indicates that the Lord manifests himself as the supreme shelter of unlimited śaktis, such as the ādhāra-śakti (containing energy), which are part of his eternal svarūpa. Yasya (of whom) expresses his relationship with designated objects. Without that relationship all objects are like flowers in the sky (insubstantial). Yena (by whom) indicates the Lord as the active cause and yataḥ (from whom) indicates the source. Yasmai indicates “for whom this exists, being suitable for his pastimes.” Yad yat indicates that the Lord is non-different from the material, spiritual worlds and jīvas because he is one with his material and spiritual energies. Yathā yadā (whenever) indicates his śakti or method and time, by which he manifests everything in a certain way and at a certain time. Śrīdhara Svāmī explains action by quoting from Śloka-vattika (343.2) of Kumarīla Bhaṭṭa:

karoti kriyamāṇena na kaścit karmaṇā vinā bhavaty arthasya kartā ca karoteḥ karma jayate
karoty arthasy yaḥ kartā bhavituḥ sa prayojakaḥ bhavitā tam apekṣyatha prayojaytvaṁ prapadyate

One cannot do anything without an object of action upon which action is undertaken. (Action should have a purpose.) The agent of the action of being (for instance clay pot) turns into the object of making (he makes a pot). The agent of making (he) is the causal agent for the agent of being (clay pot). In contrast with the causal agent, the agent of being turns into the causal object (pot). In other words, a person turns clay into a pot.

Text 85.5

etan nānā-vidhaṁ viśvam ātma-sṛṣṭam adhokṣaja
ātmanānupraviśyātman prāṇo jīvo bibharṣy aja

O transcendental Lord, from yourself you created this entire variegated universe, and then you entered within it in your personal form as the Supersoul. In this way, O unborn Supreme Soul, as the life force and consciousness of everyone, you maintain the creation.

COMMENTARY: This verse expands on the previous verse. This universe is created in him (yatra of previous verse), and by him (yena). It is created because of him (yataḥ) and belongs to him (yasya) and is non-different from him (yad yat). The creation is for him (yasmai), as part of his creation pastime.

All this is expressed by the phrase ātma-sṛṣṭam. You are the shelter of the prāṇa (kriyā-śakti) and jīva (jñāna-śakti). This indicates the method of creation (yathā). The kriyā-śakti in the form of time indicates the time of creation (yadā in the previous verse). You are the supreme shelter of everything (adhokṣaja). You are Svayam Bhagavān (aja).

Text 85.6

prāṇādīnāṁ viśva-sṛjāṁ śaktayo yāḥ parasya tāḥ
pāratantryād vaisādṛśyād dvayoś ceṣṭaiva ceṣṭatām

Whatever potencies the life air and other elements of universal creation exhibit are actually all personal energies of the Supreme Lord, for those

energies are subordinate to him, because of the difference of the Lord from his energies. Thus, everything active in the material world is set into motion by the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY: The powers of the creators of universes (Brahmā) and their prāṇas and five gross elements are powers of the Lord since they are dependent, because of the difference between the two. Because of the Lord's mercy they can complete their tasks. By his will they gain all of their powers, such as their prāṇa[1].

Text 85.7

kāntis tejaḥ prabhā sattā candrāgny-arkarkṣa-vidyutām
yat sthairyaṁ bhū-bhṛtāṁ bhūmer vṛttir gandho 'rthato bhavān

The glow of the moon, the power of fire, the radiance of the sun, the twinkling of the stars, the flash of lightning, the permanence of mountains and the aroma and sustaining power of the earth—all these are actually you.

COMMENTARY: The powers of the Lord are described in five verses (7-11). The word yat is understood with each item with a change of gender. The glow which exists in the moon and the brilliance which exists in fire are you. The word bhavān is used out of respect. After this, Vasudeva uses the word tvam out of great devotion. Then again he uses the word bhavān to interrupt his devotion. The power of the strong comes from the śakti of tejas. This was stated in the Third Canto by Kapila. This also included the power to cook. The other items should be similarly understood. The śakti of the earth is represented by mountains. The dhāraṇa-śakti or supporting energy of the earth and mountains is you. They are you because the śaktis in the cause and the effect are non-different. Their śaktis arise from your śakti. This should be understood in the other statements also.

Text 85.8

tarpaṇaṁ prāṇanam apāṁ deva tvaṁ tāś ca tad-rasaḥ
ojaḥ saho balaṁ ceṣṭā gatir vāyos taveśvara

My Lord, you are water, and also its taste and its capacities to quench thirst and sustain life. You exhibit your potencies through the

manifestations of the air as bodily warmth, vitality, mental power, physical strength, endeavor and movement.

COMMENTARY: "How can I be so many forms?" O Lord shining in unlimited ways (deva)! All these powers exist in you, the Supreme Lord (īśvara). Ceṣṭā means effort. Gatiḥ means the ability to move. Tatheśvare is another version.

Text 85.9

diśāṁ tvam avakāśo 'si diśaḥ khaṁ sphoṭa āśrayaḥ
nādo varṇas tvam oṁ-kāra ākṛtīnāṁ pṛthak-kṛtiḥ

Because you are the shelter of everything, you are the directions and their accommodating capacity, the all-pervading ether and the elemental sound residing within it. You are the primeval, unmanifested form of sound; the first syllable, oṁ; and audible speech, by which syllables, as words, acquires particular references.

COMMENTARY: You are the shelter of everything and thus you are the directions, ether, etc.

Text 85.10

indriyaṁ tv indriyāṇāṁ tvaṁ devāś ca tad-anugrahaḥ
avabodho bhavān buddher jīvasyānusmṛtiḥ satī

You are the power of the senses to reveal their objects, the senses' presiding devatās, and the sanction these devatās give for sensory activity. You are the capacity of the intelligence for decision-making, and the living being's ability to remember ordinary objects and the Lord.

COMMENTARY: You are the ordinary memory of the citta (anusmṛtiḥ) situated in the jīva (jīvasya) and also the memory that concentrates on the Lord (satī).

Text 85.11

bhūtānām asi bhūtādir indriyāṇāṁ ca taijasaḥ
vaikāriko vikalpānāṁ pradhānam anuśāyinām

You are false ego in the mode of ignorance, which is the source of the physical elements; false ego in the mode of passion, which is the source

of the bodily senses; false ego in the mode of goodness, which is the source of the demigods; and the unmanifest, total material energy, when the living entities merge into prakṛti.

COMMENTARY: Anuśāyinām refers to living entities when they merge in prakṛti. This is not the state of liberation.

Text 85.12

naśvareṣv iha bhāveṣu tad asi tvam anaśvaram
yathā dravya-vikāreṣu dravya-mātraṁ nirūpitam

You are the one indestructible entity among all the destructible things of this world, like the underlying substance that is seen to remain unchanged while the things made from it undergo transformations.

COMMENTARY: You are the indestructible material cause (upādānam). You as Brahman are the cause of all śaktis.

Text 85.13

sattvam rajas tama iti guṇās tad-vṛttayaś ca yāḥ
tvayy addhā brahmaṇi pare kalpitā yoga-māyayā

The modes of material nature—namely goodness, passion and ignorance—together with all their functions, become directly manifest within you, the Supreme Absolute Truth, by the arrangement of your yogamāyā.

COMMENTARY: "Because of the variety of śaktis, by their faults, I also will be considered faulty." The guṇas are produced by you acintya-śakti (yoga-māyā) inherent in your svarūpa. Though the guṇas are within you, you are not touched by them.

mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-mūrtinā
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ

By me, in my unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in me, but I am not in them. BG 9.4

na ca mat-sthāni bhūtāni paśya me yogam aiśvaram
bhūta-bhṛn na ca bhūta-stho mamātmā bhūta-bhāvanaḥ

And yet everything that is created does not rest in me. Behold my mystic opulence! Although I am the maintainer of all living entities and although I

am everywhere, I am not a part of this cosmic manifestation, for I am the very source of creation. BG 9.5

Text 85.14

tasmān na santy amī bhāvā yarhi tvayi vikalpitāḥ
tvaṁ cāmīṣu vikāreṣu hy anyadā vyāvahārikaḥ

At the time of pralaya when all these effects are dissolved, they no longer exist and you do not exist in them. During creation, you remain as the producer of material existence.

COMMENTARY: When at the time of pralaya all these effects are dissolved by your will as yoga-māyā through your glance, they do not exit. You do not exist in all these effects (vikāreṣu) at all (hi). At other times, during creation and maintenance, though you remain untouched, you remain as the producer of normal existence.

Text 85.15

guṇa-pravāha etasminn abudhās tv akhilātmanaḥ
gatiṁ sūkṣmām abodhena saṁsarantīha karmabhiḥ

They are truly ignorant who, while imprisoned within the ceaseless flow of this world's material qualities, fail to know you, the Supreme Soul of all that be, as their ultimate, sublime destination. Because of their ignorance, karma forces such souls to wander in the cycle of birth and death.

COMMENTARY: Those who do not know your position in relation to matter are bound in saṁsāra. Vasudeva laments their position.

bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād
īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ
bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devate ātmā

For the jīva averse to the Lord, there will be saṁsāra consisting of identity with the body and lack of identity with the soul, because of his absorption in the material coverings on the soul, arising from the Lord's māyā. Therefore, the intelligent person, taking the guru as his Lord and very self, should fully worship the Lord with pure bhakti. SB 11.2.37

Apart from the normal interpretation, there is another meaning of the verse. In spite of the fact that rivers of your qualities (guṇa-pravāhe) like mercy exist, which can be realized by all beings just by surrendering, those who are ignorant of attaining you, who are the object of surrender (gatim) for all jīvas but are hard to comprehend by individual own efforts (sūkṣmam), undergo saṁsāra by karma.

Text 85.16

yadṛcchayā nṛtāṁ prāpya su-kalpām iha durlabhām
svārthe pramattasya vayo gataṁ tvan-māyayeśvara

By good fortune a soul may obtain a healthy human life—an opportunity rarely achieved. But if he is nonetheless deluded about what is best for him, O Lord, your illusory māyā will cause him to waste his entire life.

COMMENTARY: Vasudeva laments particularly for the person who is caught in saṁsāra. Without effort, because of attaining at this time the effects of previous karma, one may attain a human form, suitable for attaining all goals (sukalpām). Another version has sukalpyām. Inattentive to you, the goal of life, his life is spent uselessly. O Lord! This happens because it is difficult to overcome your māyā.

Text 85.17

asāv aham mamaivaite dehe cāsyānvayādiṣu
sneha-pāśair nibadhnāti bhavān sarvam idaṁ jagat

You keep this whole world bound up by the ropes of affection, and thus when people consider their material bodies, they think, "This is me," and when they consider their progeny and other relations, they think, "These are mine."

COMMENTARY: He speaks this verse with affectionate anger.

Text 85.18

yuvāṁ na naḥ sutau sākṣāt pradhāna-puruṣeśvarau
bhū-bhāra-kṣatra-kṣapaṇa avatīrṇau tathāttha ha

You are not our sons but the very Lords of both material nature and its creator [Mahā-Viṣṇu]. As you yourself have told us, you have descended

to rid the earth of the rulers who are a heavy burden upon her.

COMMENTARY: The plural is used instead of the dual: you are not our (naḥ) sons. This is according to the rule: asmado dvayośca. (Pāṇini 1.2.59) You said this at the time of your birth.

Text 85.19

tat te gato 'smy araṇam adya padāravindam
āpanna-saṁsṛti-bhayāpaham ārta-bandho
etāvatālam alam indriya-lālasena
martyātma-dṛk tvayi pare yad apatya-buddhiḥ

Therefore, O friend of the distressed, I now approach your lotus feet for shelter—the same lotus feet that dispel all fear of worldly existence for those who have surrendered to them. Enough! Enough with hankering for sense enjoyment, which makes me identify with this mortal body and think of you, the Supreme, as my child.

COMMENTARY: Since you bind jīvas with the ropes of affection made of māyā, in order to destroy those bonds today, with arousal of their intelligence by your mercy, I surrender to your lotus feet. "How can he who gives bondage give liberation?" Those feet dispel fear for those who surrender. "But you have not surrendered. You are just praying for that." O friend of those suffering! One should not worry about this since you are naturally merciful. You have made them suffer in order that they turn to you, the crest jewel of all goals. Having prayed for those in saṁsāra, in humility while thinking himself a human due to human like pastimes, he actually prays for himself. Out of greed of the senses, for sense satisfaction, I think, "With the Lord as my son, I have great wealth." I am not like Nanda, who has only prema for you.

Text 85.20

sūtī-gṛhe nanu jagāda bhavān ajo nau
sañjajña ity anu-yugaṁ nija-dharma-guptyai
nānā-tanūr gagana-vad vidadhaj jahāsi
ko veda bhūmna uru-gāya vibhūti-māyām

While still in the maternity room you told us that you, the unborn Lord, had already been born several times as our son in previous ages. After manifesting each of these bodies to protect your own nature, you then made them unmanifest, unaffected like the sky. O supremely glorified, all-pervading Lord! Who can understand your spiritual abode?

COMMENTARY: "Thinking of me as your son is not imaginary, but real, since I was born to you two to fulfill my promise to you. In two previous births I spoke to you." Hearing this, Vasudeva protests with this verse. "What did I say?" Though without birth, yuga after yuga you were born to us, though this was only appearing like a birth. He shows the cause with kaimutya. You appear to protect the dharma of your devotees (bhakti). This means you take birth to protect us two. Or you take birth to maintain your nature (nija-dharma) of fulfilling the desires of your devotees. "If that is so, then my birth as your son is real and full of mercy. Why then do you criticize yourself when you think of me as your son?" You are not touched by fault, like the sky. You accept various bodies, seeming to take birth from humans, in a particular way (vi-dadhat), making an appearance that looks material. Then you unmanifest those bodies, by going to your eternal abode, the source of your appearance here. By your sweet appearance, we also appear like that. It is thus not proper to think of you as my son since it is a temporary position. "I have said you are eternal and will attain my supreme abode. Then why do you two act with such misery?" O Lord famous in the Vedic songs! Who can know the svarūpa-śakti (māyām) in the form of the supreme abode (vibhūti) of you who are full of unlimited powers (bhūmnaḥ)? What is the use of such thinking for us fallen souls?

Or, "If you deride your thinking of me as your son, then why do you think like that?" You told us that you appear as our son in various yugas. Though it is impossible to have you as a son, I think like that, on the authority of your words. "I said that only to indicate that I enter your body (as Paramātmā), not that I will become your son. You are overextending the statement of the śruti which says that I enter into all jīvas individually and collectively. Tat sṛṣṭvā tad evānuprāviśat: having created the world I entered into it." (Taittirīya Upaniṣad) Like the sky, you are unaffected. You enter into various bodies of the jīvas as the antaryāmī and then give up those bodies. Who respects that infant form of yours with little power?

Your entering us is praised by the wise. The wise are my proof, though it is impossible for me to realize this because of no qualification for realizing ātmā.

Text 85.21

śrī-śuka uvāca
ākarṇyetthaṁ pitur vākyaṁ bhagavān sātvatarṣabhaḥ
pratyāha praśrayānamraḥ prahasan ślakṣṇayā girā

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having heard his father's words, the Supreme Lord, leader of the Sātvatas, replied in a gentle voice as he bowed his head in humility and smiled.

COMMENTARY: At the revelation of his greatness, Kṛṣṇa shrunk with modesty. He was the best of the Sātvatas, appearing with birth pastimes in that family with his particular form. Because Vasudeva was his father, Kṛṣṇa acted in this way. He then revealed a smile since such words were not proper. By his attractive smile he indicated he did not give regard to his father's words glorifying his powers. The meaning is this. I accept him as my father, which is beyond what Brahmā and others could desire. Knowledge of my powers that ordinary sages realize is not proper for him and creates restrictive feelings in me. For that purpose, after I killed Kaṁsa, I increased their prema as parents. But by the words of the sages, again that respectful aspect from knowing my greatness has appeared in my parents.

Text 85.22

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
vaco vaḥ samavetārthaṁ tātaitad upamanmahe
yan naḥ putrān samuddiśya tattva-grāma udāhṛtaḥ

The Supreme Lord said: My dear father, I consider your statements appropriate, since you have explained the greatness of the Lord in reference to us, your sons.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa hides his powers in order to strengthen his father's feelings for him as his son. Taking us sons, including Gada and others (plural), as subjects, you explain the greatness of the Lord (tattva-grama).

He praises Vasudeva out of his natural modest conduct. The teaching is similar to the Upaniṣad saying, “O Śvetaketu, you are (like) that.”

Text 85.23

ahaṁ yūyam asāv ārya ime ca dvārakāukasaḥ
sarve ’py evaṁ yadu-śreṣṭha vimṛgyāḥ sa-carācaram

Not only I, but also you, along with my respected brother and these residents of Dvārakā, should all be considered in this same philosophical light, O best of the Yadus. Indeed, we should include all that exists, both moving and nonmoving.

COMMENTARY: You have taught that since everything appears from the Supreme Lord, we two can be perceived as the same, and similarly all others should be perceived in the same way. This is known from statements like sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma: everything is Brahman alone. (Chandogya Upaniṣad) That is explained in this verse. Sa-carācaram is an avyayībhava compound. O best of the Yadus, this is suitable for you to say, since people like you appear in this world in order that people can cross saṁsāra by your revelation of knowledge. Or, just as you think of us as sons by your mercy, you should think of all beings as your sons. All beings should be considered (vimṛgyāḥ) as objects of mercy by those who are merciful. Another version has vimṛśyāḥ. Then all the people in the material world will be delivered.

Text 85.24

ātmā hy ekaḥ svayaṁ-jyotir nityo ’nyo nirguṇo guṇaiḥ
ātma-sṛṣṭais tat-kṛteṣu bhūteṣu bahudheyate

The supreme spirit, Paramātmā, is indeed one. He is self-luminous and eternal, transcendental and devoid of material qualities. But Paramātmā manifests as many among the various bodies by the guṇas arising from the Lord’s māyā-śakti.

COMMENTARY: How to perceive the Lord is described in two verses (24-25). Ātmā means Paramātmā. Hi means “because.” The Paramātmā is perceived as many, with the jīvas as his aṁśas. He is perceived as devatās or humans

in bodies created by the guṇas arising from the Lord's (ātma) māyā-śakti (sṛṣṭaiḥ).

Text 85.25

khaṁ vāyur jyotir āpo bhūs tat-kṛteṣu yathāśayam
āvis-tiro-'lpa-bhūry eko nānātvaṁ yāty asāv api

The elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth become visible, invisible, minute or extensive as they manifest in various objects. Similarly, the Paramātmā, though one, appears to become many.

COMMENTARY: An example is given to show how the Lord manifests as many. The word api indicates similarity of action. As the elements like ether become big or small according to the particular appearance of the object (yathāśayam) such as a pot, so the Paramātmā (asau) becomes various according to the nature of the products of his creation. What to speak of the powers of Dvārakā manifested through his cit-śakti. One must see with this vision because you and I are that Paramātmā. I have shown equality of vision. Thus, by your excellent mercy, the people of this world will not suffer. You have spoken out of suffering for their condition. This is the real meaning of your words.

Text 85.26

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ bhagavatā rājan vasudeva udāhṛtaḥ
śrutvā vinaṣṭa-nānā-dhīs tūṣṇīṁ prīta-manā abhūt

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, hearing these instructions spoken to him by the Supreme Lord, Vasudeva became freed from all ideas of grandeur spoken by the sages. With prema for Kṛṣṇa, he remained silent.

COMMENTARY: After hearing instructions of the Lord in order that Vasudeva remains seeing him as his son while hiding his powers as the Lord, Vasudeva forgot his vision of seeing Kṛṣṇa's powers as instructed by the sages. Being full of prema for Kṛṣṇa (prīta-manāḥ), he remained silent.

Text 85.27–28

atha tatra kuru-śreṣṭha devakī sarva-devatā
śrutvānītaṁ guroḥ putram ātmajābhyāṁ su-vismitā
kṛṣṇa-rāmau samāśrāvya putrān kaṁsa-vihiṁsitān
smarantī kṛpaṇaṁ prāha vaiklavyād aśru-locanā

At that time, O best of the Kurus, the universally worshiped Devakī took the opportunity to address her two sons, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Previously she had heard with astonishment that they had brought their spiritual master's son back from death. Now, thinking of her own sons who had been murdered by Kaṁsa, she felt great sorrow, and thus with tear-filled eyes she beseeched Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

COMMENTARY: Having eliminated his father's knowledge of the Lord's greatness which was contrary to seeing the Lord as his son, Kṛṣṇa then satisfied his mother's longing for her sons. This related story is now told. Having heard that her two sons had brought back the son of their guru from death, she remained in complete astonishment. After a special realization through the conversation of Kṛṣṇa with Vasudeva, in order to obtain her desires, she spoke. Balarāma is also called ātma-ja, coming from her womb, since she heard that he was taken from her womb and implanted in Rohiṇī's womb. Devakī is called -sarva-devatā – performer of pastimes for all beings –since she was the form of śuddha-sattva, a wealth of śuddha-sattva pastimes as the mother of the Lord. Therefore her present action (which appears material) is for joyful pastimes of the Lord, arranged by the līlā-śakti of the Lord. Later it will be said mohitā māyayā viṣṇoḥ: she was bewildered by the Lord's yoga-māyā. (SB 10.85.54)

Text 85.29

śrī-devaky uvāca
rāma rāmāprameyātman kṛṣṇa yogeśvareśvara
vedāhaṁ vāṁ viśva-sṛjām īśvarāv ādi-pūruṣau

Śrī Devakī said: O Rāma, Rāma, immeasurable Supreme Soul! O Kṛṣṇa, Lord of all masters of yoga! I know that you are the ultimate rulers of all universal creators, the primeval Lords.

COMMENTARY: She addresses Balarāma first and his name is repeated out of respect because he is elder and out of respect because he is the son of a

co-wife (Rohiṇī). He is unlimited since he by nature is beyond measure. He has greater, more inconceivable powers than the Kumāras and other great yogīs. This is because both of them are Lords of Brahmā and other controllers of the universe. Thus they are the original puruṣas.

Text 85.30

kala-vidhvasta-sattvānāṁ rājñām ucchāstra-vartinām
bhūmer bhārāyamāṇānām avatīrṇau kilādya me

Taking birth from me, you have now descended to this world in order to kill those kings whose good qualities have been destroyed by the present age, and who thus defy the authority of revealed scriptures and burden the earth.

COMMENTARY: The kings have had all their sattva-guṇa destroyed and therefore have transgressed scripture. Thus they create a burden for the earth. Because of this, you two have appeared from me at the end of Dvāpara yuga (adya).

Text 85.31

yasyāṁśāṁśāṁśa-bhāgena viśvotpatti-layodayāḥ
bhavanti kila viśvātmaṁs taṁ tvādyāhaṁ gatiṁ gatā

O source of the universe! The creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe are all carried out by a fraction of an expansion of an expansion of your expansion. Today I have come to take shelter of you, the Supreme Lord.

COMMENTARY: Having praised both of them, taking them both as one person she surrenders. Kila means famous. O root form within the universe (viśvātman)! Until now, I have not made requests to you. Now I surrender to make a request.

Text 85.32–33

cirān mṛta-sutādāne guruṇā kila coditau
āninyathuḥ pitṛ-sthānād gurave guru-dakṣiṇām
tathā me kurutaṁ kāmaṁ yuvāṁ yogeśvareśvarau
bhoja-rāja-hatān putrān kāmaye draṣṭum āhṛtān

It is said that when your spiritual master ordered you to retrieve his long-dead son you brought him back from the forefathers' abode as a token of remuneration for your guru's mercy. Please fulfill my desire in the same way, O supreme masters of all yoga masters. Please bring back my sons who were killed by the King of Bhoja, so that I may see them once again.

COMMENTARY: Like your guru's desire, my desire should also be fulfilled. You were requested by your guru to bring back his long dead son. Just as you brought back his son in the same form as before, as repayment to your guru, bring back my sons. Thinking of the importance of her desire, and thinking that previously the indication was unclear, she makes her intention clear: I desire to see my sons killed by Kaṁsa after they are brought back from Yama's abode by you two.

Text 85.34

ṛṣir uvāca
evaṁ sañcoditau mātrā rāmaḥ kṛṣṇaś ca bhārata
sutalaṁ saṁviviśatur yoga-māyām upāśritau

The sage Śukadeva said: Thus entreated by their mother, O Bhārata, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa employed their mystic yogamāyā potency and entered the region of Sutala.

COMMENTARY: Sometimes sañcoditaḥ is seen instead of sañcoditau. O best of the Bhāratas! Śukadeva praises Parīkṣit out of joy on remembering within himself the amazing feats Kṛṣṇa performed in relation to him!

Text 85.35

tasmin praviṣṭāv upalabhya daitya-rāḍ
viśvātma-daivaṁ sutarāṁ tathātmanaḥ
tad-darśanāhlāda-pariplutāśayaḥ
sadyaḥ samutthāya nanāma sānvayaḥ

When the King of the Daityas, Bali Mahārāja, noticed the arrival of the two Lords, his heart overflowed with joy, since he knew them to be the Supreme Soul and worshipable deity of the entire universe, and especially of himself. He immediately stood up and then bowed down to offer respects, along with his entire entourage.

COMMENTARY: Bali had attained them in person after long desiring to see them (upa-labdhva). He had attained now what was otherwise unobtainable. The two are described as one. He saw the two as the soul of the universe and worthy of worship (daivam), but (tathā) more than that, as his own object of worship since he had offered everything to Vāmana, who was his family deity. He rose while folding his hands (sam-utthāya). He is called "king of the demons" out of respect. Or, he was acting as king of other demons. Therefore he had an entourage.

Text 85.36

tayoḥ samānīya varāsanaṁ mudā
niviṣṭayos tatra mahātmanos tayoḥ
dadhāra pādāv avanijya taj jalaṁ
sa-vṛnda ā-brahma punad yad ambu ha

Bali took pleasure in offering them elevated seats. After they sat down, he washed the feet of the two Supreme Lords. Then he took that water, which purifies the whole world even up to Brahmā, and poured it upon himself and his followers.

COMMENTARY: With joy, bowing his head, he offered (sam-ānīya) them one excellent seat, seeing them as one entity out of affection. Tayoḥ is repeated out of great bhakti. Some versions have tadā instead of tayoḥ. When they were seated and were satisfied, he washed their feet and placed the water on his head. Instead of dadhāra sometimes babhāra is seen.

Text 85.37

samarhayām āsa sa tau vibhūtibhir
mahārha-vastrābharaṇānulepanaiḥ
tāmbūla-dīpāmṛta-bhakṣaṇādibhiḥ
sva-gotra-vittātma-samarpaṇena ca

He worshiped them with all the riches at his disposal—priceless clothing, ornaments, fragrant sandalwood paste, betel nut, lamps, sumptuous food and so on. Thus he offered them all his family's wealth, and also his own self.

COMMENTARY: He worshiped them in an extraordinary way (sam-arhayām āsa). That is described. Instead of sa tau sometimes sutau (the two sons) is seen. The wealth he offered is described. This included food like nectar such as sweet rice and drinks, or nectar and edibles, or fruit and betel-nuts. Ādibhiḥ indicates jewel-studded cots. He offered everything including himself. Just as he had offered everything to Vāmana, he now offered everything to Kṛṣṇa, Svayam Bhagavān, since he did not see them as different.

Text 85.38

sa indraseno bhagavat-padāmbujaṁ
bibhran muhuḥ prema-vibhinnayā dhiyā
uvāca hānanda-jalākulekṣaṇaḥ
prahṛṣṭa-romā nṛpa gadgadākṣaram

Taking hold of the Lords' lotus feet again and again, Bali, the conqueror of Indra's army, spoke from his heart, which was melting out of his intense love. O King, as tears of ecstasy filled his eyes and the hair on his limbs stood on end, he began to speak with faltering words.

COMMENTARY: Bali, who had an army of four divisions almost equal to Indra's (indra-senaḥ), took both Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet on his head simultaneously. He thought of them as one. He did this constantly, again and again, putting them on his head and chest, since he was unsatisfied. Or he put the feet on his head with prema which constantly increased. Ha expresses Śukadeva's joy as he addresses Parīkṣit. "O King!" The symptoms of Bali's prema are described. His eyes were filled with tears because of joy. For meter's sake ānanda is compounded with the other words instead of being in the instrumental case. The word ānanda also modifies the other phrases. His hairs stood on end because of bliss, with his voice choked because of bliss. Instead of gadgadākṣaram (adverbial phrase) sometimes gadgadākṣaraḥ is seen.

Text 85.39

balir uvāca
namo 'nantāya bṛhate namaḥ kṛṣṇāya vedhase
sāṅkhya-yoga-vitānāya brahmaṇe paramātmane

King Bali said: Obeisances to Ānanta, to Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, the creator of the universe, the goal of jñāna and yoga, who is thus Brahman and Paramātmā.

COMMENTARY: I offer respects to the second member of Kṛṣṇa's vyūha (anantāya). The gopīs in lamentation address him as the friend of Ananta or Balarāma (ananta-sakhaḥ). (SB 10.39.30) This name includes Śeṣa: that is indicated by the word bṛhate (huge). I offer respects to Kṛṣṇa, famous as Svayam Bhagavān (kṛṣṇāya), since he is the creator of everything (vedhase). "But the jñāna scriptures speak of Brahman and the yoga scriptures speak of Paramātmā. What about them?" He is the object of the scriptures of jñāna and yoga. He is indicated by those scriptures in his partial form. Kapila-deva says:

jñāna-yogaś ca man-niṣṭho nairguṇyo bhakti-lakṣaṇaḥ
dvayor apy eka evārtho bhagavac-chabda-lakṣaṇaḥ

The goal of jñāna, fixed on my expansion as Brahman, beyond the guṇas, and the goal of bhakti are actually only one goal, which is known by the word Bhagavān. SB 3.32.32

Thus I offer respects to you, who are also Brahma and Paramātmā.

Text 85.40

darśanaṁ vāṁ hi bhūtānāṁ duṣprāpaṁ cāpy adurlabham
rajas-tamaḥ-svabhāvānāṁ yan naḥ prāptau yadṛcchayā

Seeing you Lords is a rare achievement for most living beings. But even persons like us, situated in the modes of passion and ignorance, can easily see you when you reveal yourself by your own sweet will.

COMMENTARY: Hi means certainly. Ca also means api. Thus the verse "Certainly seeing you two is difficult to achieve but also not difficult to achieve when, by your will, you consent to see us."

Text 85.41–43

daitya-dānava-gandharvāḥ siddha-vidyādhra-cāraṇāḥ
yakṣa-rakṣaḥ-piśācāś ca bhūta-pramatha-nāyakāḥ
viśuddha-sattva-dhāmny addhā tvayi śāstra-śarīriṇi
nityaṁ nibaddha-vairās te vayaṁ cānye ca tādṛśāḥ

kecanodbaddha-vaireṇa bhaktyā kecana kāmataḥ
na tathā sattva-saṁrabdhāḥ sannikṛṣṭāḥ surādayaḥ

Many who had been constantly absorbed in enmity toward you ultimately became attracted to you, who are the supervisor of goodness and the source of scriptures. These reformed enemies include Daityas, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Vidyādharas, Cāraṇas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Piśācas, Bhūtas, Pramathas and Nāyakas, and also ourselves and many others like us. Some of us have become attracted to you because of exceptional hatred, while others have become attracted because of mixed bhakti. But the devatās are not attracted to you in this way.

COMMENTARY: Though the demons are completely inimical to you, that animosity is nothing. Still they become attracted to you, who are the supervisor (dhāmni) of pure sattva, unmixed with rajas and tamas, and the source of the scriptures (śāstra-śarīriṇi). They become inimical to devotees who take the demons as unfavorable since the demons reject the scriptures, because of their natures of rajas and tamas. Consequently, they are naturally inimical to you who protect the devotees. The Gandharvas, Siddhas, Vidyādharas and Cāraṇas, though not inimical to the Lord by nature, often follow the demons because of their natures of rajas and tamas. Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Piśācas and others, and I also, having natures of tamas, follow the demons and are well known for our evil natures. I am included with the demons. Because of that, I also have strong animosity for you. Some others, humans such as Kaṁsa, are similar to the demons. The two words ca indicate that these persons are predominant.

Some of these humans such as Pauṇḍraka are in pure tamas and have extreme animosity. Thus they become completely absorbed in thinking of the Lord. Some achieved liberation (sannikṛṣṭāḥ). Others like me, having bhakti mixed with rajas, with desires for fame and other things, were attracted by places in the three worlds. The devatās however were not attracted in this way.

Text 85.44

idam ittham iti prāyas tava yogeśvareśvara
na vidanty api yogeśā yoga-māyāṁ kuto vayam

What to speak of ourselves, O Lord of all perfect yogīs, even the greatest mystics do not know your spiritual powers.

COMMENTARY: The Kumāras and others (yogeśāḥ) cannot know your special powers (yogam-māyām), because you possess inconceivable, unlimited great powers (yogeśvareśvara). This is generally so (prāyaḥ), since some devotees can understand your powers. Or, the devatās alone deserve to see you and not I. Then verses 41-43 are spoken. Because the demons such as I, are firmly inimical to you, some become extremely inimical. Others who develop bhakti but with self-interest only, are thus still firmly inimical to you. The devatās are not like that since they have sattva. Thus they are qualified to attract you and see you. How then can we know the reason that you in your form as Svayam Bhagavān along with Balarāma came here so that I can see you? The present verse answers this question: no one knows.

Or, you come to display your powers by showing your special mercy. He praises Kṛṣṇa's mercy in this verse. No one knows your mercy (māyā) which is your special power (yoga). Even persons like the Kumāras do not know by what cause such mercy (ittham idam) will occur, since you have unlimited powers such as the ability to be the unlimited cause (yogeśvareśvara).

Text 85.45

tan naḥ prasīda nirapekṣa-vimṛgya-yuṣmat
pādāravinda-dhiṣaṇānya-gṛhāndha-kūpāt
niṣkramya viśva-śaraṇāṅghry-upalabdha-vṛttiḥ
śānto yathaika uta sarva-sakhaiś carāmi

Please be merciful to me so I may get out of the blind well of family life—my false home—and find the true shelter of your lotus feet, which selfless sages always seek. Then, taking the nature of your servant, having attained your lotus feet, I will leave my followers and wander in the company of devotees, who are the friends of everyone.

COMMENTARY: Because of your merciful nature mentioned in the previous verse, therefore (tat) be merciful to me. He describes that mercy. The feet of you two are sought but not immediately achieved by liberated souls, who are also endowed with the bhāva of pure devotees. Those feet are like

lotuses because they destroy all suffering, are most beautiful, and give the greatest fragrance. Because they are the supreme shelter, they are the best home. Other places are simply dull reflections. Get me out of this house which is actually like a blind well since it is the cause of bondage for a great fool, especially if it is Sutala, which is different from the shelter of your feet. Having attained your lotus feet which are the object of surrender for the universe, remaining as your servant (vṛttiḥ), going alone, not with followers, I will wander about with your devotees who are friends of everyone. Because they are friendly, they will not criticize me.

Text 85.46

śādhy asmān īśitavyeśa niṣpāpān kuru naḥ prabho
pumān yac chraddhayātiṣṭhaṁś codanāyā vimucyate

O Lord of all subordinate creatures, please tell us what to do and thus free us of all sin. Even one who faithfully executes the rules of the Vedas is free of sin.

COMMENTARY: If you do not give this mercy plentifully to me, devoid of good fortune, then please tell me your purpose in coming. By this I can become successful. Please instruct me a little. The Lord is qualified for this. Under your supervision are Brahmā and other leaders (īśa), who need to be instructed (īśitavya)! You should not think that we are unsuitable to follow your instructions. First make us free of obstacles to bhakti (niṣpāpān). If you consent to instruct us, obstacles will be destroyed and our qualification will be accomplished. He gives proof. A person who faithfully follows the ordinary, traditional injunctions of the Vedas, what to speak of your direct instructions, is freed from sin.

Text 85.47

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
āsan marīceḥ ṣaṭ putrā ūrṇāyāṁ prathame 'ntare
devāḥ kaṁ jahasur vīkṣya sutāṁ yabhitum udyatam

The Supreme Lord said: During the age of the first Manu, the sage Marīci had six sons by his wife Ūrnā. They were all exalted devatās, but once

they laughed at Brahmā when they saw him preparing to have sex with his own daughter.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa gives an introduction so that his request will be accepted. The request comes later. Though the sons were devatās they laughed at Brahmā.

Text 85.48–49

tenāsurīm agan yonim adhunāvadya-karmaṇā
hiraṇyakaśipor jātā nītās te yoga-māyayā
devakyā udare jātā rājan kaṁsa-vihiṁsitāḥ
sā tān śocaty ātmajān svāṁs ta ime 'dhyāsate 'ntike

Because of that improper act, they immediately entered a demoniac form of life, and thus they took birth as sons of Hiraṇyakaśipu. The goddess Yogamāyā then took them away from Hiraṇyakaśipu, and they were born again from Devakī's womb. After this, O King, Kaṁsa murdered them. Devakī still laments for them, thinking of them as her sons. These same sons of Marīci are now living here with you.

COMMENTARY: He explains how they were born to demons. In the commentary on the second chapter of the Tenth Canto it is explained how they were born to Hiraṇyakaśipu. Kṛṣṇa then explains his proposal in two and a half verses (49-51). First he speaks with compassion for Devakī. She laments because they were her own sons. They could not be hidden. Jokingly he says, "They are now here." They were placed near Bali, his great devotee who was omniscient, so that Bali could see the Lord.

Text 85.50

ita etān praṇeṣyāmo mātṛ-śokāpanuttaye
tataḥ śāpād vinirmaktā lokaṁ yāsyanti vijvarāḥ

We wish to take them from this place to dispel their mother's sorrow. Then, released from their curse and free from all suffering, they will return to their home in heaven.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa states his desire in two verses (50-51). We will take them with affection (pra-neṣyamaḥ). The plural expresses the dual number according to the rule asmado dvayoś ca (Pāṇini 1.2.59) This will be

beneficial for them. Instead of śapād vinirmuktāḥ sometimes śapa-vinirmuktāḥ is seen. They will be freed (muktāḥ) from demonic natures (vi) and from demonic bodies (ni). Therefore they will be free of all suffering (vijvarāḥ). They will then return to their place where they existed before they became demons' sons, since they still have desires for enjoyment.

Text 85.51

smarodgīthaḥ pariṣvaṅgaḥ pataṅgaḥ kṣudrabhṛd ghṛṇī
ṣaḍ ime mat-prasādena punar yāsyanti sad-gatim

By my grace these six—Smara, Udgītha, Pariṣvaṅga, Pataṅga, Kṣudrabhṛt and Ghṛṇī—will later go to my eternal abode.

COMMENTARY: He names them so there will be certainty of their identities. After their enjoyment, they will later attain the Lord's eternal abode, the place of the aprakaṭa pastimes of the Yādavas (sad-gatim).

Text 85.52

ity uktvā tān samādāya indrasenena pūjitau
punar dvāravatīm etya mātuḥ putrān ayacchatām

After saying this, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, having been duly worshiped by Bali Mahārāja, took the six sons and returned to Dvārakā, where they presented them to their mother.

COMMENTARY: Taking them, fully clothed, by the hand (sam-ādāya), honored by Bali with offerings, they returned to Dvārakā; and presented the sons to their mother (mātuḥ should be mātre).

Text 85.53

tān dṛṣṭvā bālakān devī putra-sneha-snuta-stanī
pariṣvajyāṅkam āropya mūrdhny ajighrad abhīkṣṇaśaḥ

When she saw her lost children, Devakī felt such affection for them that milk flowed from her breasts. She embraced them and took them onto her lap, smelling their heads again and again.

COMMENTARY: By the will of the Lord, to please his mother, the sons took on their infant bodies as Kīrtiman and others.

Text 85.54

apāyayat stanaṁ prītā suta-sparśa-parisnutam
mohitā māyayā viṣṇor yayā sṛṣṭiḥ pravartate

Lovingly she let her sons drink from her breast, which became wet with milk touched by Kṛṣṇa. She was entranced by the Lord's yoga-māyā, by which Viṣṇu initiates the creation of the universe.

COMMENTARY: Her breasts were completely flowing with milk which had been touched by Kṛṣṇa and other sons. Another version has pariplūtam. This means her breasts were covered with the affection of her sons. The cause is explained. She was bewildered by yoga-māyā-śakti, for his pastimes. The creation pastime is mentioned in this regard but the mention of creation by the Lord's bahiraṅga-śakti (which is different from the antaraṅga-śakti which bewilders her) is only for easy understanding of common people.

Text 85.55–56

pītvāmṛtaṁ payas tasyāḥ pīta-śeṣaṁ gadā-bhṛtaḥ
nārāyaṇāṅga-saṁsparśa-pratilabdhātma-darśanāḥ
te namaskṛtya govindaṁ devakīṁ pitaraṁ balam
miṣatāṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ yayur dhāma divaukasām

After drinking her nectarean milk, the remnants of what Kṛṣṇa himself had previously drunk, the six sons, touched by the hand of Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of all beings, attained their original identities. They bowed down to Govinda, Devakī, their father and Balarāma, and then, as everyone looked on, they left for the abode of the devatās.

COMMENTARY: They had drunk the milk which was filled with the highest bliss (amṛtam), which was the remnant of Kṛṣṇa. He is called the holder of the club because taking his club, he went to the lower worlds to retrieve her sons. Devakī first had Kṛṣṇa take the milk from her breast. They were directly touched by the hand of Svayam Bhagavān, the shelter of all beings (nārāyaṇa). They then assumed their devatā forms again. They went to the devatās' planet without affection for their mother or others by the will of the Lord, according to their desire, while all beings looked on with joy.

Instead of divaukasām sometimes vihāyasā (accepted by Śrīdhara Svāmī) is seen.

Text 85.57

taṁ dṛṣṭvā devakī devī mṛtāgamana-nirgamam
mene su-vismitā māyāṁ kṛṣṇasya racitāṁ nṛpa

Seeing her sons return from death and then depart again, saintly Devakī was struck with wonder, O King. She concluded that this was all simply an illusion created by Kṛṣṇa.

COMMENTARY: The Lord had her continue her affection for him. That is explained in this verse. She saw her departed sons come and then go. Agamana-nirgamam may also be considered a dvandva compound in the singular as in ūkālo 'j-jhrasva-dīrgha-plutaḥ. (Pāṇini 1.2.27)

She considered their birth and coming from Sutala to have been produced by Kṛṣṇa by māyā, in order to cheat Kaṁsa. It was a show of his affection for her. They had entered Devakī as embryos with their previous bodies, but they did not come out of Devakī with those forms. After their death by Kaṁsa, they again assumed those devatā forms. That is understood from these verses.

Text 85.58

evaṁ-vidhāny adbhutāni kṛṣṇasya paramātmanaḥ
vīryāṇy ananta-vīryasya santy anantāni bhārata

Kṛṣṇa, the source of all things, the Lord of unlimited valor, performed countless pastimes just as amazing as this one, O descendant of Bharata.

COMMENTARY: Śukadeva summarizes the stories about Kṛṣṇa in order to conclude the work quickly, fearing that Parīkṣit's departure time was at hand. The stories are infinite, since simultaneously he reveals unlimited pastimes. This was witnessed by Nārada. The cause is that Kṛṣṇa has unlimited powers (ananta-vīryasya), because he is the source of all other forms (paramātmanaḥ).

Text 85.59

śrī-sūta uvāca
ya idam anuśṛṇoti śrāvayed vā murāreś
caritam amṛta-kīrter varṇitaṁ vyāsa-putraiḥ
jagad-agha-bhid alaṁ tad-bhakta-sat-karṇa-pūraṁ
bhagavati kṛta-citto yāti tat-kṣema-dhāma

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said: This pastime enacted by Murāri, whose fame is blissful, totally destroys the sins of the universe and serves as the eternal ornament for his devotees' ears. Anyone who constantly hears or narrates this pastime, as recounted by the venerable son of Vyāsa, will be able to fix his mind in meditation on the Supreme Lord and attain auspicious Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY: Joyful from Kṛṣṇa's many pastimes as described by his most worshipable guru Śukadeva, Sūta, satisfying the listeners with a summary by repeating the glories of the pastime, while giving prominent blessings, makes it understood that the attainments that the associates of his pastimes attain is not astonishing, since it can be attained even by the listeners. Anyone (yaḥ) who constantly hears this pastime of Kṛṣṇa (idam) —what was previously described, even a little—can fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa and attain him. Qualification is rejected. The person constantly (anu) hears the topic, because its nature is to produce taste by listening even once. The word vā is used along with anu to indicate that one should not commit offenses in order that one can attain the future result quickly. Or, if one has the ability, one should hear constantly for one's own and other's success. Its strength is described. Because this is the pastime of Kṛṣṇa whose fame is filled with blissful rasa (amṛta), Śukadeva has described it. When he did so, there was a special excellence. Pibantaṁ tvan-mukhāmbhoja-cyutaṁ hari-kathāmṛtam: I am drinking the nectar of topics about Kṛṣṇa, which is flowing from your lotus mouth. (SB 10.1.13) Therefore the topic destroys all sins of the universe and even all obstacles to bhakti. Thus, the person's heart becomes absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, the subject of the story. The person attains great happiness in this life. He also attains happiness in the next life. Kṛṣṇa's eternal abode Dvārakā is most auspicious (kṣemam). Smṛtyāśeṣāśubha-haraṁ sarva-maṅgala-maṅgalam: it is the most auspicious of all auspicious places, and merely remembering it destroys all contamination. (SB 11.31.24) By hearing the story, the sādhakas gradually

attain the result. The siddhas however immediately possess that result: the story is an eternal ear-ornament for those devotees.

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[1] Prāṇa means sutra (transformation of mahat-tattva) according to Śrīdhara Svāmī.

Chapter Eighty-six
Lord Kṛṣṇa Instructs Vasudeva and Retrieves Devakī's Sons

Text 86.1

śrī-rājovāca
brahman veditum icchāmaḥ svasārāṁ rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ
yathopayeme vijayo yā mamāsīt pitāmahī

King Parīkṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, we would like to learn how Arjuna married Balarāma's and Kṛṣṇa's sister, who was my grandmother.

COMMENTARY: Seeing signs of the conclusion of the pastimes, Parīkṣit becomes frightened and asks a question so that the stories would continue. He asks about the marriage of his grandmother in which Kṛṣṇa was a major cause. He had long desired to ask about this. I desire to know how the marriage took place. Since she was the sister of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, such a marriage would have been difficult to achieve. Arjuna's name Vijaya (conquest) indicates that he was successful in attaining her. Parīkṣit was anxious to hear this story because Subhadrā was his grandmother.

Text 86.2–3

śrī-śuka uvāca
arjunas tīrtha-yātrāyāṁ paryaṭann avanīṁ prabhuḥ
gataḥ prabhāsam aśṛṇon mātuleyīṁ sa ātmanaḥ
duryodhanāya rāmas tāṁ dāsyatīti na cāpare
tal-lipsuḥ sa yatir bhūtvā tri-daṇḍī dvārakām agāt

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While traveling far and wide visiting various holy places of pilgrimage, Arjuna came to Prabhāsa. There he heard that Balarāma intended to give his maternal cousin Subhadrā to Duryodhana in marriage, and that no one else approved of this plan. Arjuna wanted to marry her himself, so he disguised himself as a renunciant, complete with triple staff, and went to Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma wanted to give Subhadrā, his material cousin, to Duryodhana. Others did not approve of this. It was considered best if Arjuna married her, since she was a maternal cousin, and it would show respect for his friendship with Kṛṣṇa. This is the custom in the south at present and elsewhere as well. Balarāma acted in this way in order that Kṛṣṇa could have some exciting pastimes. Desiring her, Arjuna disguised himself as a sannyāsī in order to gain entrance to the palace. He appeared most respectable since he carried a tridaṇḍa which indicated his philosophical views as a Vaiṣṇava.

Text 86.4

tatra vai vārṣitān māsān avātsīt svārtha-sādhakaḥ
pauraiḥ sabhājito 'bhīkṣṇaṁ rāmeṇājānatā ca saḥ

He stayed there during the monsoon months to fulfill his purpose. Balarāma and the other residents of the city, not recognizing him, offered him all honor and hospitality.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma did not recognize him since he was bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's līlā-śakti.

Text 86.5

ekadā gṛham ānīya ātithyena nimantrya tam
śraddhayopahṛtaṁ bhaikṣyaṁ balena bubhuje kila

One day Balarāma brought him to his home as his invited dinner guest, and Arjuna ate the food Balarāma respectfully offered him.

COMMENTARY: One day at the end of cātur-māsya, Balarāṁa invited him, fearing he would soon depart. Kila indicates that he certainly ate there.

Text 86.6

so 'paśyat tatra mahatīṁ kanyāṁ vīra-mano-harām
prīty-utphullekṣaṇas tasyāṁ bhāva-kṣubdhaṁ mano dadhe

There Arjuna saw the wonderful maiden Subhadrā, who was enchanting to heroes. His eyes opened wide with delight, and his mind became agitated and absorbed in thoughts of her.

COMMENTARY: Mahatīm means she was mature. She was attractive to heroes. Another version has dhīra instead of vīra. She was attractive even to persons who were in control of their passions such as Arjuna. He became absorbed in thinking of her.

Text 86.7

sāpi taṁ cakame vīkṣya nārīṇāṁ hṛdayaṁ-gamam
hasantī vrīḍitāpaṅgī tan-nyasta-hṛdayekṣaṇā

Arjuna was very attractive to women, and as soon as Subhadrā saw him, she wanted to have him as her husband. Smiling bashfully with sidelong glances, she fixed her heart and eyes upon him.

COMMENTARY: He was attractive to all women what to speak of her. Seeing him, she understood that he was not a sannyāsī, but someone who should be her husband. She experienced this through previous impressions and by her intuitive skill. Putting him in her eyes and heart, she desired him. She smiled out of joy and in a joking mood. She threw smiling side glances but with shyness, since she was well trained by her family.

Text 86.8

tāṁ paraṁ samanudhyāyann antaraṁ prepsur arjunaḥ
na lebhe śaṁ bhramac-cittaḥ kāmenāti-balīyasā

Meditating only on her and waiting for the opportunity to take her away, Arjuna had no peace. His heart trembled with passionate desire.

COMMENTARY: He waited for an opportunity. Though worshipped by Balarāma and the citizens, he obtained no happiness (śam) from that. Or, he could not be peaceful, since his heart was trembling.

Text 86.9

mahatyāṁ deva-yātrāyāṁ ratha-sthāṁ durga-nirgatāṁ
jahārānumataḥ pitroḥ kṛṣṇasya ca mahā-rathaḥ

Once, on the occasion of a great temple festival in honor of the Supreme Lord, Subhadrā rode out of the fortress-like palace on a chariot, and at that time the mighty chariot warrior Arjuna took the opportunity to kidnap her. Subhadrā's parents and Kṛṣṇa had sanctioned this.

COMMENTARY: This was a festival held after the Lord rises at the end of cātur-māsya. Vasudeva and Devakī approved of his taking her, through Kṛṣṇa's cleverness. After that, Kṛṣṇa approved. Kṛṣṇa placed her on a chariot in order to give Arjuna the ingredients within the chariot. That is understood from Ādi-parva of Mahābhārata. "Kidnapping would be difficult since they were amongst all the Yadu members." But he was the best of warriors (mahā-rathaḥ) since he was the dear friend of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 86.10

ratha-stho dhanur ādāya śūrāṁś cārundhato bhaṭān
vidrāvya krośatāṁ svānāṁ sva-bhāgaṁ mṛga-rāḍ iva

Standing on his chariot, Arjuna took up his bow and drove off the valiant fighters and palace guards who tried to block his way. As her relatives shouted in anger, he took Subhadrā away just as a lion takes his prey from the midst of lesser animals.

Text 86.11

tac chrutvā kṣubhito rāmaḥ parvaṇīva mahārṇavaḥ
gṛhīta-pādaḥ kṛṣṇena suhṛdbhiś cānusāntvitaḥ

When he heard of Subhadrā's kidnapping, Balarāma became as disturbed as the ocean during the full moon, but Kṛṣṇa respectfully took hold of his feet and, together with other family members, pacified him by explaining the matter.

COMMENTARY: Balarāma was pacified by sweet words and enlightened about the matter. Another version has anvaśāmyata instead of anusāntvitaḥ.

Text 86.12

prāhiṇot pāribarhāṇi vara-vadhvor mudā balaḥ
mahā-dhanopaskarebha-rathāśva-nara-yoṣitaḥ

Balarāma then happily sent the bride and groom very valuable wedding gifts as well as elephants, chariots, horses and male and female servants.

COMMENTARY: Then Balarāma, who was most powerful (balaḥ), sent gifts in joy. He understood from friends that she had been taken by Arjuna with

the consent of Kṛṣṇa. He sent the most valuable ornaments and cots and other things.

Text 86.13

śrī-śuka uvāca
kṛṣṇasyāsīd dvija-śreṣṭhaḥ śrutadeva iti śrutaḥ
kṛṣṇaika-bhaktyā pūrṇārthaḥ śāntaḥ kavir alampataḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: There was a devotee of Kṛṣṇa's known as Śrutadeva, who was a first-class brāhmaṇa. Perfectly satisfied by rendering unalloyed devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, he was peaceful, learned and free from sense gratification.

COMMENTARY: Though not requested, Śukadeva now recites a pastime that he heard, attractive because it shows Kṛṣṇa's direct mercy to his devotee in meeting that devotee. A new topic is introduced with the words "Śukadeva said." Śrutadeva was the best of brāhmaṇas, fully dedicated to Kṛṣṇa. He was fully endowed with artha, dharma, and kāma because of his pure bhakti (eka-bhaktyā) to Kṛṣṇa alone, even though he did not desire these things. His heart was fixed on Kṛṣṇa (śāntaḥ) because he had all knowledge (kaviḥ). He was not attracted to material enjoyment.

Text 86.14

sa uvāsa videheṣu mithilāyāṁ gṛhāśramī
anīhayāgatāhārya-nirvartita-nija-kriyaḥ

Living as a religious householder in the city of Mithilā, within the kingdom of Videha, he managed to fulfill his obligations while maintaining himself with whatever sustenance easily came his way.

COMMENTARY: As a householder he lived in Mithilā city of Videha province. What he obtained without begging, that he accepted. But he accepted for himself only what he needed to survive. He did not accept that in the name of the Lord. And he did not accept more than he needed.

Text 86.15

yātrā-mātraṁ tv ahar ahar daivād upanamaty uta
nādhikaṁ tāvatā tuṣṭaḥ kriyā cakre yathocitāḥ

By the will of the Lord he obtained each day just what he needed for his maintenance, and no more. Satisfied with this much, he properly executed his religious duties.

COMMENTARY: He did what was favorable for the Lord. He obtained what was necessary by the Lord's arrangement. Yoga-kṣema vahāmy aham: I maintain what the devotee has and supply what he lacks. (BG 9.22) Uta means certainly. He took his share (upanamati), and never was in lack. He was satisfied with that, and performed his worship of the Lord.

Text 86.16

tathā tad-rāṣṭra-pālo 'ṅga bahulāśva iti śrutaḥ
maithilo niraham-māna ubhāv apy acyuta-priyau

Similarly free from false ego was the ruler of that kingdom, my dear Parīkṣit, a descendant of the Mithila dynasty named Bahulāśva. Both these devotees were very dear to Acyuta.

COMMENTARY: The protector of that province, the king, was similar to the brāhmaṇa in devotion. Thus he did not think himself a devotee of the Lord (niraham-mānaḥ). Without distinction they were both dear to the Lord, who never deviates from his qualities such as being merciful to his devotees.

Text 86.17

tayoḥ prasanno bhagavān dārukeṇāhṛtaṁ ratham
āruhya sākaṁ munibhir videhān prayayau prabhuḥ

Pleased with both of them, the Supreme Lord mounted his chariot, which Dāruka had brought, and traveled to Videha with a group of sages.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa went there on his chariot with sages on the same chariot, because the two devotees were attractive to him.

Text 86.18

nārado vāmadevo 'triḥ kṛṣṇo rāmo 'sito 'ruṇiḥ
ahaṁ bṛhaspatiḥ kaṇvo maitreyaś cyavanādayaḥ

Among these sages were Nārada, Vāmadeva, Atri, Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa, Paraśurāma, Asita, Aruṇi, myself, Bṛhaspati, Kaṇva, Maitreya and

Cyavana.

COMMENTARY: The sages are listed by name.

Text 86.19

tatra tatra tam āyāntaṁ paurā jānapadā nṛpa
upatasthuḥ sārghya-hastā grahaiḥ sūryam ivoditam

In every city and town the Lord passed along the way, O King, the people came forward to worship him with offerings of arghya water in their hands, as if to worship the sun which had risen and was surrounded by planets.

COMMENTARY: O King! He addresses Parīkṣit out of joy. Though the sages were effulgent, in proximity to the Lord their effulgence dulled.

Text 86.20

ānarta-dhanva-kuru-jāṅgala-kaṅka-matsya-
pāñcāla-kunti-madhu-kekaya-kośalārṇāḥ
anye ca tan-mukha-sarojam udāra-hāsa-
snigdhekṣaṇaṁ nṛpa papur dṛśibhir nr-nāryaḥ

The men and women of Ānarta, Dhanva, Kuru-jāṅgala, Kaṅka, Matsya, Pañcāla, Kunti, Madhu, Kekaya, Kośala, Arṇa and many other kingdoms drank with their eyes the sweet beauty of Kṛṣṇa's lotus face, which was graced with generous smiles and affectionate glances.

COMMENTARY: The people of Ānarta and other places, all the men and women, saw Kṛṣṇa's lotus face with great attraction. The provinces are listed in order when travelling from Dvārakā to Videha. Some in the list are neighboring states. He went out of longing to some places even though the places were far off. He went to other places to give them mercy. And to all the places he went one after the other to give them bliss. The next verse says that he finally arrived at Videha. This verse also mentions that he met the people of Vraja (madhu). He did this by entering into the aprakaṭa pastimes there (since the residents had by that time disappeared).

Text 86.21

tebhyaḥ sva-vīkṣaṇa-vinaṣṭa-tamisra-dṛgbhyaḥ
kṣemaṁ tri-loka-gurur artha-dṛśaṁ ca yacchan
śṛṇvan dig-anta-dhavalaṁ sva-yaśo ’śubha-ghnaṁ
gītaṁ surair nṛbhir agāc chanakair videhān

Simply by glancing at those who came to see him, Kṛṣṇa, the spiritual master of the three worlds, delivered them from the blindness of materialism. As he thus endowed them with fearlessness and spiritual vision, he heard devatās and men singing his glories, which purify the entire universe and destroy all misfortune. Eventually, he reached Videha.

COMMENTARY: “How could they see the form of para-brahman with eyes covered by ignorance? How could they follow the chariot which went as fast as the wind?” The ignorance in their eyes (men’s and women’s eyes) was destroyed by his glance. He gave them fearlessness and vision. Their eyes were endowed with the prakāśaka-śakti (his energy which causes revelation) arising from the Lord’s svarūpa, in the form of bhakti. Bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ: I am only obtainable by bhakti. (SB 11.14.21) By the manifestation of those eyes they could see Kṛṣṇa. Thus he is called guru of the three worlds, since he initiated them with bhakti. Hearing his glories which purify the ends of the directions, sung by the devatās in the sky and by humans on earth, delayed because of meeting all these people, he finally came to Videha.

Text 86.22

te ’cyutaṁ prāptam ākarṇya paurā jānapadā nṛpa
abhīyur muditās tasmai gṛhītārhaṇa-pāṇayaḥ

Hearing that Acyuta had arrived, O King, the residents of the cities and villages of Videha joyfully came forth to receive him with offerings in their hands.

COMMENTARY: On hearing that Kṛṣṇa, full of all beauty and qualities, had arrived, joyful citizens, with hands holding articles of worship such as arghya for him, approached him.

Text 86.23

dṛṣṭvā ta uttamaḥ-ślokaṁ prīty-utphulānanāśayāḥ
kair dhṛtāñjalibhir nemuḥ śruta-pūrvāṁs tathā munīn

As soon as the people saw Uttamaḥśloka, their faces and hearts blossomed with affection. Joining their palms above their heads, they bowed down to the Lord and to the sages accompanying him, whom they had previously only heard about.

COMMENTARY: Having heard of Kṛṣṇa's glories from far off, they had desired to see him for a long time. They thought that by seeing him they would be successful. Now they directly saw Kṛṣṇa, praised because of his glories. They placed their hands above their heads so that they could see his beautiful face. They bowed to the sages because they knew of their glories from previously hearing about them. Thus they were excited on seeing them.

Text 86.24

svānugrahāya samprāptaṁ manvānau taṁ jagad-gurum
maithilaḥ śrutadevaś ca pādayoḥ petatuḥ prabhoḥ

Both the King of Mithilā and Śrutadeva fell at the Lord's feet, each thinking that the spiritual master of the universe had come there just to show him mercy.

COMMENTARY: Thinking that the guru of the universe, worshipped by Brahmā and others, had come (praptam) to give mercy, along with the sages (sam), the two fell at the feet of their own Lord, or he who was able to fulfill all their desires (prabhoḥ). The best brāhmaṇa Śrutadeva is mentioned after the king, since out of meekness he remained behind the king out of respect.

Text 86.25

nyamantrayetāṁ dāśārham ātithyena saha dvijaiḥ
maithilaḥ śrutadevaś ca yugapat saṁhatāñjalī

At exactly the same time, King Maithila and Śrutadeva each went forward with joined palms and invited the Lord of the Daśārhas to be his guest, along with the brāhmaṇa sages.

COMMENTARY: They both invited the Lord along with the sages (dvijaiḥ) to their houses.

Text 86.26

bhagavāṁs tad abhipretya dvayoḥ priya-cikīrṣayā
ubhayor āviśad geham ubhābhyāṁ tad-alakṣitaḥ

Wanting to please them both, the Lord accepted both their invitations. Thus, he simultaneously went to both homes, and neither could see him entering the other's house.

COMMENTARY: The Lord entered both houses completely, with all the sages (ā-viśat). The Lord expanded into two forms. The sages also became two forms but not independent of the Lord's will.

Text 86.27–29

śrāntān apy atha tān dūrāj janakaḥ sva-gṛhāgatān
ānīteṣv āsanāgryeṣu sukhāsīnān mahā-manāḥ
pravṛddha-bhaktyā uddharṣa-hṛdayāsrāvilekṣaṇaḥ
natvā tad-aṅghrīn prakṣālya tad-apo loka-pāvanīḥ
sa-kuṭumbo vahan mūrdhnā pūjayāṁ cakra īśvarān
gandha-mālyāmbarākalpa-dhūpa-dīpārghya-go-vṛṣaiḥ

When King Bahulāśva, a descendant of Janaka, saw Lord Kṛṣṇa approaching his house from a distance with the sages, who were somewhat fatigued from the journey, he immediately arranged to have seats of honor brought out for them. After they were all comfortably seated, the wise king, his heart overflowing with joy and his eyes clouded by tears, bowed down to them and washed their feet with intense devotion. Taking the water, which could purify the entire world, he sprinkled it on his head and the heads of his family members. Then he worshiped all those great lords by offering them fragrant sandalwood paste, flower garlands, fine clothing and ornaments, incense, lamps, arghya and bulls.

COMMENTARY: First the actions of the king are described. His mind was most excellent (mahā-manāḥ) since it was fixed on Kṛṣṇa. His eyes flowed with tears and his heart was joyful. With increasing bhakti, he bowed and

washed their feet. He put the water on his head. Go-vṛṣa means bulls. The items are in order of value.

Text 86.30

vācā madhurayā prīṇann idam āhānna-tarpitān
pādāv aṅka-gatau viṣṇoḥ saṁspṛśañ chanakair mudā

When they had eaten to their full satisfaction, for their further pleasure the king began to speak slowly and in a gentle voice as he held Kṛṣṇa's feet in his lap and happily touched them.

COMMENTARY: After they were satisfied with food, he pleased them with words like, "I am most fortunate. I am most successful by your presence." Then he spoke as follows, first to the Lord. That is described in the next verse. The feet of Kṛṣṇa, who pervades the universe, went onto his lap, by the Lord's mercy. He touched the feet with a special skill (mudā), very gently, since Kṛṣṇa's feet were most tender. Thus it is said that he just touched them.

Text 86.31

śrī-bahulāśva uvāca
bhavān hi sarva-bhūtānām ātmā sākṣī sva-dṛg vibho
atha nas tvat-padāmbhojaṁ smaratāṁ darśanaṁ gataḥ

Śrī Bahulāśva said: O almighty Lord, you are the soul of all created beings, their self-illumined witness, and now you are giving your audience to us, who constantly meditate on your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY: He praises Kṛṣṇa by describing his unconditional mercy in coming personally to his house though he is unqualified. Hi means "because." You are self-manifesting (sva-dṛk): others depend on your mercy. You give consciousness (ātmā) to the jīvas who are your vibhinnāṁśas by their nature: you are the shelter of a spiritual form, just as the sun is the shelter of light for its rays. You are also the maker of their upādhis. You are the witness (sākṣī) of the material worlds. Just as a person who is unattached reveals an object to others, you reveal yourself to the jīvas. I have been able to see you because you have the ability to show yourself to jīvas like me and because you have natural mercy. This is

because of your mercy, through a show of your prakāśakā-śakti. I have remembered your lotus feet to some degree, but not with the bliss of prema. Or, I remember by making a great effort. Those feet are like lotuses, by their nature destroying all suffering of the person who attains them by a power unknown to me. Instead of jīvānām sometimes bhūtānām is seen.

Text 86.32

sva-vacas tad ṛtaṁ kartum asmad-dṛg-gocaro bhavān
yad āttthaikānta-bhaktān me nānantaḥ śrīr ajaḥ priyaḥ

You have said, "Neither Ananta, Goddess Śrī nor unborn Brahmā is dearer to me than my unalloyed devotee." To prove your own words true, you have now revealed yourself to our eyes.

COMMENTARY: Ananta as a brother, Lakṣmī as a wife, and Brahmā as a son are not as dear, but they become most dear to me as pure devotees. You have said this. To show that those words are true, you have become visible to me. You have been merciful to me as one among your unlimited followers. You show your words are true, since Ananta, Lakṣmī and Brahmā have not come with you, but these sages have been brought. This is a suitable statement because they have śānta-rasa (like Bahulāśva). According to their bhāva, the Lord makes his appearance.

Text 86.33

ko nu tvac-caraṇāmbhojam evaṁ-vid visṛjet pumān
niṣkiñcanānāṁ śāntānāṁ munīnāṁ yas tvam ātma-daḥ

What person who knows this truth would ever abandon your lotus feet, when you are ready to give your very self to peaceful sages who call nothing their own?

COMMENTARY: It is also rare that you follow your devotees. But such quality in you becomes a hope for me. Who would give up your feet with these qualities? They are the object of pure devotees and have the quality of mercy. Those feet should not be given up, because sages give up everything in order to attain you, since they are your devotees (śāntānām). They are devotees because they have studied the meaning of scriptures. You become controlled by them.

Text 86.34

yo ’vatīrya yador vaṁśe nṛṇāṁ saṁsaratām iha
yaśo vitene tac-chāntyai trai-lokya-vṛjināpaham

Appearing in the Yadu dynasty, you have spread your glories, which can remove all the sins of the three worlds, just to deliver those entrapped in the cycle of birth and death.

COMMENTARY: Related to this, you have now appeared and distribute your quality of unlimited mercy everywhere to the highest degree. Being merciful to your pure devotees, in this world you have distributed your glories more than before (vi-tene).

Text 86.35

namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate kṛṣṇāyākuṇṭha-medhase
nārāyaṇāya ṛṣaye su-śāntaṁ tapa īyuṣe

Obeisances to you, Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, whose intelligence is ever unrestricted, who remain as Nārāyaṇa in Badrikāśrama. You reveal the Vedas, are full of bliss, and perform kṣatriya dharma to benefit others.

COMMENTARY: Before making his request, he offers respects. I offer respects to you, possessing unrestricted knowledge. What knowledge can others give you? Moreover, in order to benefit all people even today you remain in Badarikāśrama and perform austerities in one of your forms: I offer respects to Nārāyaṇa. Therefore, you can also give benefit to us. Or, I offer respects to the shelter of all jīvas (nārāyaṇāya), because you are the revealer of the Vedas (ṛṣaye). Therefore, you are full of intense happiness which does not change (śāntāya—another version). I offer respects to you who perform kṣatriya dharma to teach the people. The version suśānta-tapa means “performing austerities of kṣatriya dharma to benefit the people.”

Text 86.36

dināni katicid bhūman gṛhān no nivasa dvijaiḥ
sametaḥ pāda-rajasā punīhīdaṁ nimeḥ kulam

Please stay a few days in our house, along with these brāhmaṇas, O all-pervading one, and, with the dust of your feet, sanctify this dynasty of

Nimi.

COMMENTARY: Having praised the Lord, he now humbly makes his request. In saying, "Stay for some days" he shows his modesty. O great Lord (bhūman)! Though you are complete in all respects, out of mercy fulfill my desire. Stay in my house with the sages. Instead of nivasa sometimes nivasan is seen. Nimi was also your devotee.

Text 86.37

ity upāmantrito rājñā bhagavāḹ loka-bhāvanaḥ
uvāsa kurvan kalyāṇaṁ mithilā-nara-yoṣitām

Thus, invited by the king, the Supreme Lord, sustainer of the world, consented to stay for some time to bestow good fortune on the men and women of Mithilā.

COMMENTARY: Requested with insistence (upa-manitritaḥ), he stayed.

Text 86.38

śrutadevo 'cyutaṁ prāptaṁ sva-gṛhāñ janako yathā
natvā munīn su-saṁhṛṣṭo dhunvan vāso nanarta ha

Śrutadeva received Acyuta into his home with as much enthusiasm as that shown by King Bahulāśva. After bowing down to the Lord and the sages, Śrutadeva began to dance with great joy, waving his shawl.

COMMENTARY: Like the king (janako yathā) he had increased bhakti, with tears in his eyes and joy in his heart. Instead of munīn sometimes munīn ca is seen. The word ha indicates joy.

Text 86.39

tṛṇa-pīṭha-bṛṣīṣv etān ānīteṣūpaveśya saḥ
svāgatenābhinandyāṅghrīn sa-bhāryo 'vanije mudā

After bringing mats of grass and darbha straw and seating his guests upon them, he greeted them with words of welcome. Then he and his wife washed their feet with great pleasure.

COMMENTARY: He offered Kṛṣṇa and sages seats suitable for sannyāsīs, made of new grass and darbha, brought from his house, and, personally

touching their feet with great devotion, had them sit.

Text 86.40

tad-ambhasā mahā-bhāga ātmānaṁ sa-gṛhānvayam
snāpayāṁ cakra uddharṣo labdha-sarva-manorathaḥ

With the wash water, the virtuous Śrutadeva sprinkled himself, his house and his family. Overjoyed, he felt that all his desires had now been fulfilled.

COMMENTARY: He sprinkled himself with the water from Kṛṣṇa's feet which was otherwise unobtainable by him. Śukadeva expresses his respect by calling himself the most fortunate (mahā-bhāgaḥ). Śrutadeva was overjoyed because his desires were now fulfilled.

Text 86.41

phalārhaṇośīra-śivāmṛtāmbubhir
mṛdā surabhyā tulasī-kuśāmbuyaiḥ
ārādhayām āsa yathopapannayā
saparyayā sattva-vivardhanāndhasā

He worshiped them with offerings of auspicious items easily available to him, such as fruits, uśīra root, pure, nectarean water, fragrant clay, tulasī leaves, kuśa grass and lotus flowers. Then he offered them food that increases the mode of goodness.

COMMENTARY: Śukadeva, pleased by the brāhmaṇa's good fortune, recites with a longer meter to describe the brāhmaṇa's actions in two verses (41-42). He satisfied (ārādhayām āsa) the Lord with worship (saparyayā) by offering fruits etc. He offered fruit, an auspicious gift, articles of worship like arghya (ārhaṇa), then uśīra root as incense, cooked and dried āmalaka fruit – sprinkled about to remove obstacles, in order to achieve his life's desires, and water sweet as nectar. After they were relieved of fatigue, at noon he had them bathe, and offered them fragrant earth. He offered perfumes such as musk, which had been stored for some time with ketakī and other fragrant leaves in new, sealed pots. Srīdhara Svāmī says this was equivalent to musk. He offered tulasī, kuśa and lotuses so they could worship deities. He offered food that increased sattva-guṇa, since the

ingredients had not been begged. Though unmentioned, he also offered ācamana and other items.

Text 86.42

sa tarkayām āsa kuto mamānv abhūt
gṛhāndha-kūpe patitasya saṅgamaḥ
yaḥ sarva-tīrthāspada-pāda-reṇubhiḥ
kṛṣṇena cāsyātma-niketa-bhūsuraiḥ

He wondered: How is it that I, fallen into the blind well of family life, have been able to meet Lord Kṛṣṇa? And how have I also been allowed to meet these great brāhmaṇas, who always carry the Lord within their hearts? The dust of their feet is the shelter of all holy places.

COMMENTARY: I should not become proud that the Lord has come to my house with his devotees. With that realization as a cause, he speaks with a lowly attitude on realizing the mercy of the Lord upon him. How have I met Kṛṣṇa and these brāhmaṇas within whose minds the form of Kṛṣṇa (asya ātma) always appears?

Text 86.43

sūpaviṣṭān kṛtātithyān śrutadeva upasthitaḥ
sa-bhārya-svajanāpatya uvācāṅghry-abhimarśanaḥ

When his guests were seated comfortably, having each received a proper welcome, Śrutadeva approached them and sat down nearby with his wife, children and other dependents. Then, while massaging the sages' feet, he addressed Kṛṣṇa and the sages.

COMMENTARY: He approached his guests and spoke, mainly to Kṛṣṇa. He massaged the feet of the sages.

Text 86.44

śrutadeva uvāca
nādya no darśanaṁ prāptaḥ paraṁ parama-pūruṣaḥ
yarhīdaṁ śaktibhiḥ sṛṣṭvā praviṣṭo hy ātma-sattayā

Śrutadeva said: I have attained the audience of the Supreme Person only today, for we have never seen him ever since he created this universe

with his energies and then entered it as Paramātmā.

COMMENTARY: Pleased at suddenly seeing the Lord he praises him. I have been able to see you only today, when you have made your appearance on earth. Beginning from the time when you created the universe and entered it as Paramātmā (ātma-sattayā), I have not seen you. Seeing you suddenly is your great mercy. It is understood from this that the brāhmaṇa never went to Dvārakā. He says this out of feeling lowly. He conjectures about the position of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 86.45

yathā śayānaḥ puruṣo manasaivātma-māyayā
sṛṣṭvā lokaṁ paraṁ svāpnam anuviśyāvabhāsate

The Lord is like a sleeping person who creates a separate world in his imagination and then enters his own dream and appears within it.

COMMENTARY: Just as a sleeping person, because of your māyā, by the mind, creates another world in a dream, imagines himself and others related to him, and enters into that world and appears in it, so you create this universe and appear in it.

Text 86.46

śṛṇvatāṁ gadatāṁ śaśvad arcatāṁ tvābhivandatām
ṇṛṇāṁ saṁvadatām antar hṛdi bhāsy amalātmanām

You reveal yourself within the hearts of those persons of pure consciousness who constantly hear about you, chant about you, worship you, glorify you and converse with one another about you.

COMMENTARY: "But I have appeared in your heart previously." That is not possible in my case. He speaks out of humility. You appear in the minds favorable to you, in minds of persons who are pure, not in the minds of persons like me. These pure persons constantly hear, constantly chant, constantly worship, constantly glorify and constantly converse about you.

Text 86.47

hṛdi-stho 'py ati-dūra-sthaḥ karma-vikṣipta-cetasām
ātma-śaktibhir agrāhyo 'py anty upeta-guṇātmanām

But although you reside within the heart, you are very far away from those whose minds are disturbed by their karma. No one can grasp you by his material powers, for you reveal yourself only in the hearts of those who have learned to appreciate your qualities.

COMMENTARY: "As antaryāmī I reside in their hearts. Why do you say that I appear to those who are dedicated to hearing and other processes?" You are in everyone's heart but are also far away. "By doing sat-karmas the mind becomes pure. Then I can reside in them." You cannot be attained by an individual's material power. "If that is so, how do I then appear?" As was said in verse 45, it is possible for those who hear and chant about your qualities.

Text 86.48

namo 'stu te 'dhyātma-vidāṁ parātmane
anātmane svātma-vibhakta-mṛtyave
sa-kāraṇākāraṇa-liṅgam īyuṣe
sva-māyayāsaṁvṛta-ruddha-dṛṣṭaye

Let me offer my obeisances unto you. You are realized as the Supreme Soul by those who know the Absolute Truth, whereas in your form of time you impose death upon the forgetful souls. You appear both in your causeless spiritual form and in the created form of this universe, thus simultaneously uncovering the eyes of your devotees and obstructing the vision of the nondevotees.

COMMENTARY: Since I did not accomplish these acts of bhakti, the cause of my meeting you is only your mercy. He offers respects in bliss, describing the Lord's mercy. Using the form namas astu indicates continual existence of offering respect. You appear as the root form of everything (paramātmane) for those who know the truth about you, since there exists no other ātmā than the human para-brahman (anātmane).

You are death for the demons who reject your spiritual (sva) form (ātma). Having stated the glory of the Lord's svarūpa, he speaks of his manifested power as objects (vaibhava). The Lord eternally possesses vaibhavas in the form of the temporary universe (sa-kāraṇam) and the permanent spiritual world (akāraṇam). Śruti says utāmṛtatvasyeśānaḥ: the Lord has an eternal

abode. (Puruṣa-sūkta) “Then why am I difficult for you to attain?” You do not cover the vision of those in the spiritual world but you cover the vision of those in the material world. Thus my seeing you is only your mercy.

Text 86.49

sa tvaṁ śādhi sva-bhṛtyān naḥ kiṁ deva karavāma he
etad-anto nṛṇāṁ kleśo yad bhavān akṣi-gocaraḥ

O Lord, you are that Supreme Soul. Instruct us since we are your servants. How shall we serve you? My Lord, simply seeing you puts an end to all the troubles of human life.

COMMENTARY: Instruct me since I am your servant. Not only that, but I also want to please you. What can I do to please you (te)? The reason is given: you are my object of worship (deva)! It is necessary for the servants to please the deity they worship. “How can people suffering in this world follow my orders?” My suffering disappeared on seeing you. Now I can follow your orders. That is my only goal.

Text 86.50

śrī-śuka uvāca
tad-uktam ity upākarṇya bhagavān praṇatārti-hā
gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇiṁ prahasaṁs tam uvāca ha

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After hearing Śrutadeva speak these words, the Supreme Lord, who relieves his surrendered devotees’ distress, took Śrutadeva’s hand in his own and, smiling, spoke to him as follows.

COMMENTARY: Hearing his words with great attention (upa-karṇya), the Lord smiled in joy (pra-hasan) and spoke, since he takes away all suffering of his devotees (praṇātārti-hā), even if they only offered respects once. Therefore, he took Śrutadeva’s hand. The word ha indicates joy.

Text 86.51

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
brahmaṁs te ’nugrahārthāya samprāptān viddhy amūn munīn
sañcaranti mayā lokān punantaḥ pāda-reṇubhiḥ

The Supreme Lord said: My dear brāhmaṇa, you should know that these great sages have come here just to bless you. They travel throughout the worlds with me, purifying them with the dust of their feet.

COMMENTARY: Embarrassed by being praised, since the Lord is the crest jewel among the well-mannered, with great affection for his devotees, Kṛṣṇa gave respect to the bhakti of his devotees and taught the method by which Śrutadeva could attain his desires. O brāhmaṇa, you are the form of the Vedas. You should know this. Know that the sages have come on their own (sam-prāptān), along with me, just to give mercy to you. "You have personally come. The sages' coming is more than necessary." They wander about with me in their hearts, and sometimes along with me (mayā). The meaning is as if the word saha were present. Saha yoge 'pradhāne. (Pāṇini 2.3.19) I am dependent on them.

Text 86.52

devāḥ kṣetrāṇi tīrthāni darśana-sparśanārcanaiḥ
śanaiḥ punanti kālena tad apy arhattamekṣayā

One can gradually become purified by seeing, touching and worshiping temple deities, places of pilgrimage and holy rivers. But one can attain the same result immediately simply by receiving the glance of exalted sages.

COMMENTARY: He explains the greater power of the devotees. The deity forms of the devatās or their direct appearance, and holy land (kṣetrāṇi) or water (tīrthāni) gradually purify, and over a long time.

But by the glance of those who wander about (mentioned in the previous verse)—the devotees who are more worthy of worship (arhattama) than the deity forms or tīrthas—one becomes purified at once. This is the main cause of purification. And thus even I am dependent on you.

Text 86.53

brāhmaṇo janmanā śreyān sarveṣām prāṇinām iha
tapasā vidyayā tuṣṭyā kim u mat-kalayā yutaḥ

By his very birth, a brāhmaṇa is the best of all living beings in this world, and he becomes even more exalted when he is endowed with austerity,

learning and self-satisfaction, what to speak of devotion to me.

COMMENTARY: He establishes their qualities using kaimutya. The brāhmaṇa is the best simply by his birth caste. He is better by following his dharma (tapas). But he who has realized my sphūrti (kalayā) is the best. What more can be said? Better than following his dharma (tapasā) is to have knowledge of scripture (vidyayā). Better than that is to be an ātmārāma (tuṣṭyā). Better than that is to realize my sphūrti (kalayā). The sequence is in order of increasing excellence.

Text 86.54

na brāhmaṇān me dayitaṁ rūpam etac catur-bhujam
sarva-veda-mayo vipraḥ sarva-deva-mayo hy aham

Even my own four-armed form is no dearer to me than a brāhmaṇa. Within himself a learned brāhmaṇa comprises all the Vedas, just as within myself I comprise all the devatās.

COMMENTARY: Even my four-armed form that you see (etat) is not as dear as the brāhmaṇa described. The reason is given. Just as the brāhmaṇa possesses all knowledge of the Vedas, so I possess the form most worthy of worship (sarva-deva-mayaḥ) which is taught in the Vedas. He makes the brāhmaṇas the object of comparison and himself the subject of comparison. Without the object of comparison, the subject does not show excellence. He thus shows the excellence of the brāhmaṇa by this comparison. A similar example is found in the Ninth Canto:

nāham ātmānam āśāse mad-bhaktaiḥ sādhubhir vinā
śriyaṁ cātyantikīṁ brahman yeṣāṁ gatir ahaṁ parā

O best of the brāhmaṇas, without saintly persons for whom I am the only destination, I do not desire to enjoy my transcendental bliss and my supreme opulences. SB 9.4.64

Text 86.55

duṣprajñā aviditvaivam avajānanty asūyavaḥ
guruṁ māṁ vipram ātmānam arcādāv ijya-dṛṣṭayaḥ

Ignorant of this truth, foolish people neglect and enviously offend a learned brāhmaṇa, who, being nondifferent from me, is their spiritual

master and very self. They consider worshipable only such obvious manifestations of divinity as my deity form.

COMMENTARY: Not knowing the brāhmaṇa is worthy of worship, thinking that the deity form alone should be worshipped, they offend him, though he is a guru, the instructor of all beings, since he is a great devotee. They thus offend me since he is non-different from me, since he is my favorite abode, and they thus offend Paramātmā (ātmānam). This is because they are unintelligent, and cannot tolerate them, seeing all humans as equal to themselves (asūyavaḥ).

Text 86.56

carācaram idaṁ viśvaṁ bhāvā ye cāsya hetavaḥ
mad-rūpāṇīti cetasy ādhatte vipro mad-īkṣayā

Because he has realized me, a brāhmaṇa is firmly fixed in the knowledge that I am the basis of everything moving and nonmoving in the universe, and also the primary elements of its creation.

COMMENTARY: Having shown how they are mahā-bhāgavatas, he shows the cause of seeing them as non-different from himself. Rūpa means "that within which things manifest." Thus rūpāni here means resting places. The brāhmaṇa realizes fully (ā-dhatte) in his heart that I am the basis of the material universe since it arises from one of my manifestations (mad-īkṣayā).

sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ

The most advanced devotee sees the Supreme Lord, one's object of worship, within everything, and sees everything in the Supreme Lord. SB 11.2.45

māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te 'pi yānti parāṁ gatim

O son of Pṛthā, those who take shelter in me, though they be of lower birth —women, vaiśyas and śūdras—can attain the supreme destination. BG 9.32

Text 86.57

tasmād brahma-ṛṣīn etān brahman mac-chraddhayārcaya
evaṁ ced arcito 'smy addhā nānyathā bhūri-bhūtibhiḥ

Therefore, you should worship these brāhmaṇa sages, O brāhmaṇa, with the same faith you have in me. If you do so, you will worship me directly, which you cannot do otherwise, even with offerings of vast riches.

COMMENTARY: Worship these brāhmaṇas, who have knowledge of me and are therefore dearest to me. This also indicates, "Worship all my devotees." Do this with great affection (mac-chraddhayā). If you do this, you worship me directly (addhā). If you reject my devotees, I cannot be worshipped even with great wealth.

Text 86.58

śrī-śuka uvāca
sa itthaṁ prabhunādiṣṭaḥ saha-kṛṣṇān dvijottamān
ārādhyaikātma-bhāvena maithilaś cāpa sad-gatim

Śrī Śuka said: So instructed by his Lord, with single-minded devotion Śrutadeva worshiped Kṛṣṇa and the topmost brāhmaṇas accompanying him, and King Bahulāśva did the same. Thus both Śrutadeva and the king attained the ultimate destination.

COMMENTARY: The Lord also gave instructions to the king. Following the instructions, they attained the result. The brāhmaṇa and the king, instructed by their own Lord, with great faith in those instructions, worshipped Kṛṣṇa along with the brāhmaṇa sages with great devotion and constant endeavor. They attained the eternal abode of the Lord and sages.

Text 86.59

evaṁ sva-bhaktayo rājan bhagavān bhakta-bhaktimān
uṣitvādiśya san-mārgaṁ punar dvāravatīm agāt

O King, thus the Lord, who is devoted to his own devotees, stayed for some time with his two great devotees Śrutadeva and Bahulāśva, teaching them about devotion to the Lord and the devotees. Then the Lord returned to Dvārakā.

COMMENTARY: Teaching them bhakti-yoga with devotion to the Lord and his devotees (san-margam), he stayed for a long time with them in order to

please them, since he was attracted to the devotion of his devotees (bhakta-bhaktimān), or since he had prema for his devotees.

Chapter Eighty-seven
Prayers by the Personified Vedas

Text 87.1

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca
brahman brahmaṇy anirdeśye nirguṇe guṇa-vṛttayaḥ
kathaṁ caranti śrutayaḥ sākṣāt sad-asataḥ pare

Śrī Parīkṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, how can the Vedas directly describe the Supreme Absolute Truth, who cannot be described in words? The Vedas are limited to describing the qualities of material nature, but the Supreme is devoid of these qualities, being transcendental to all material manifestations and their causes.

COMMENTARY: I worship Govardhana Mountain, best of the Lord's servants, under whose shelter I will try to explain the meaning of the prayers of the Vedas. I offer respects to the Bhāgavatam, by whose mercy alone all people can know all the Vedas, which were not previously known. I offer respect to the feet of Śrīdhara Svāmī, who is affectionate to the lowly, by whose mercy, seeing the path, I became a Vaiṣṇava. I offer respects to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the Lord and antaryāmī, whose inspiration alone is the cause of all causes[1].

At the end of the previous chapter it was said ādiśya sanmāragam: he taught the path of bhakti. The teaching is defined according to tat tu samanvayāt: the Lord is the conclusion of all scriptures. (Brahma-sūtra 1.1.4) The highest aspect of that conclusion is as follows:

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavān iti śabdyate

The knowers of truth call this truth advayam-jñānam, the supreme conscious being, who is called brahman by the jñānīs, Paramātmā by the yogīs and Bhagavān by the devotees. SB 1.2.11

This supreme truth is called Brahman by some who think the supreme is without qualities. However, for the devotees who accept the intrinsic śaktis and unlimited qualities of the Lord he is called Paramātmā and Bhagavān.

By his śakti of being antaryāmī, Bhagavān is Paramātmā. In his supreme abode and other places, he is Bhagavān with his full manifestation of pure powers, by his supreme svarūpa-śakti which, as a sport, controls his māyā-śakti. The Lord is called advayam because without śakti, in the absence of śakti, without the effects of his śakti (which is non-different from him), there would be no other object in existence at all. The conclusive meaning of the statements ekam evādvitīyam brahma and neha nānāsti kincit, which forbid variety, is found in the following:

na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate
na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate
parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

He has no body and no senses. No one is equal to him or higher. His supreme power is manifold. It is natural to him, endowed with knowledge, strength and action. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

Śukadeva was not overly critical of a neutral stance on this matter. Thinking that the philosophy in which Brahman is without qualities and the Bhagavān as simply a material devatā, though he was actually the supreme Brahman with all śaktis, was definitely not the conclusion, Parīkṣit could not tolerate criticism of the Lord and obscuration of the Lord's qualities, since he had been protected by the Lord. Wanting to clarify Śukadeva's views by approaching him, he challenged him as the knower of the Vedas, "O brāhmaṇa!"

Or the seed of his challenge lay in the previous statement "The brāhmaṇa is all the Vedas, and I am all the devatās." (SB 10.86.54) He criticizes that statement since the Lord is the conclusion of the Vedas, not the brāhmaṇas.

The conventional meaning of guṇa (material qualities) cannot be used for the Lord. Guṇa means the effects of sattva, rajas and tamas, and white and other colors. Nirguṇa means devoid of those attributes. Since the Lord is beyond material guṇas, it is not possible to describe him in terms of material variety. Material variety arises from the guṇas. Therefore Brahman's svarūpa cannot be described, since, by being beyond the guṇas, its very nature is different from the known scriptures. It cannot be

described by words like “bliss” since bliss is a well-known manifestation from the material citta. That is the opinion of impersonalists. Inference from circumstances and other states of mind are also rejected because the Lord has no material guṇas. According to the impersonalists, the Lord’s inherent spiritual qualities do not exist; there is no proof in the Vedas for spiritual qualities in the impersonal Brahman.

The devotees however say that the Lord has a unique svarūpa, since he is described as having an extraordinary form beyond that of a material human. He has no bondage by material māyā, since he has qualities which are beyond māyā. He is beyond material cause and effect, since he produces them. Still, the Lord functions in all capacities according to the Lord’s own words:

māṁ vidhatte ’bhidhatte māṁ vikalpyāpohyate tv aham
etāvān sarva-vedārthaḥ śabda āsthāya māṁ bhidām
māyā-mātram anūdyānte pratiṣidhya prasīdati

The Vedas indicate bhakti as the action and indicate me as the meaning. I am the meaning of all the Vedas. I, as karma and jñāna, am proposed and rejected as alternatives. The Vedas, taking shelter of me, proposing karma and jñāna and then rejecting them as māyā, become happy by giving the devotees bliss. SB 11.21.43

vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyaḥ

By all the Vedas, I am to be known. BG 15.15

Statements like yato vāco nivartante (words cannot describe him, Taittirīya Upaniṣad) indicate his infinite nature. But this does not mean that one cannot attain the Lord. One can attain him through action and knowledge. The statement merely sets a limitation on understanding the Lord. Otherwise the very sentence yato vacā nivartate could not even be uttered (since it uses words). Aprāpya manasā saha: he is beyond attainment by the mind. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad) Then it is said ānandaṁ brahmaṇo vidvān na bibheti kutaścana: one who knows the bliss of Brahman has no fear. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad) It is explained that Brahman is attained by knowledge, not by words. Thus the statement “He cannot be expressed by words” means that is impossible to describe the Lord properly because of his infinite nature.

There are the following statements to support this meaning. śāstra-yonitvāt: knowledge of the Lord is produced from scripture. (Brahma-sūtra 1.1.3) śruteś tu śabda mūlavātat: the statements of śruti-śāstra are the root of real knowledge. (Brhama-sūtra 2.1.27) Tarkāprathiṣṭhānāt: logic is insubstantial. (Brhama-sūtra 2.1.11) taṁ tv aupaniṣadaṁ puruṣaṁ pṛchāmi: I ask about the Lord who is the subject of the Upaniṣads. (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad) naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā proktānyenaiva sujñānāya preṣṭa: O dear Naciketa, do not destroy your intelligence suitable for worshipping the Lord by logic. (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.9)

There should be harmony in all the statements of the Vedas, because the śrutis are the highest scriptural proof and there should be no need to use other proofs. Therefore, according to Śrīdhara Svāmī, how can the Vedas speak of the impersonal Brahman (which cannot be described by scriptures)? Not at all, since they speak of the personal Brahman.

Text 87.2

śrī-śuka uvāca
buddhīndriya-manaḥ-prāṇān janānām asṛjat prabhuḥ
mātrārthaṁ ca bhavārthaṁ ca ātmane 'kalpanāya ca

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The Supreme Lord manifested the material intelligence, senses, mind and vital air of the living entities so that they could indulge their desires for sense gratification, take repeated births to engage in fruitive activitieskarma, become elevated in future lives and ultimately attain liberation.

COMMENTARY: One version has ṛṣir uvāca (the sage said). This indicates his skill in answering because of his omniscience. Śuka uvāca indicates the story told in the Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa: he was freed from the bondage of māyā by Kṛṣṇa himself. Since he had received the mercy of the Lord like Parīkṣit, with similar experiences, his answer would be favorable to Parīkṣit.

The meaning is this. The Lord is defined as the supreme cause in terms of primary (svarūpa) or secondary (taṭastha) qualities. Both however result in the existence of Bhagavān, not in impersonal Brahman[2]. This is acccording to the statement yaḥ sarvajñaḥ sarva-vit: he is omniscient and

all-perceiving. (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad) He is called prabhuḥ in the above verse because he is not dependent on any other being. By his very nature he is īśvara or the Supreme Lord. He possesses all-pervading jñāna-śakti, iccha-śakti and kriyā-śakti (powers of knowing, willing and acting). Saytaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma: the Lord is existence and infinite knowledge. Vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma: the Lord is knowledge and bliss. (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad) Yal lakṣyate tasyaiva khalv etasyānandasyānyāni bhūtāni mātrām upajīvanti: all living beings take their life from the Lord full of bliss. (Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.32) Ko hy evānyāt kaḥ prāṇyād yad eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt: who could breathe without this Brahman, if this blissful Brahman were not present? (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.7.1) ānandād eva khalv imāni bhūtāni jāyante ānandena jātāni jīvanti ānandaṁ prayanty abhisaṁviśanti: from bliss the living beings arise, by bliss they live and into bliss they merge. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 3.6.1)

na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate
na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate
parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

He has no body and no senses. No one is equal to him or higher. His supreme power is manifold. He has intrinsic knowledge, strength and action. Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad

These śruti statements show that the Lord has intrinsic śaktis. Tvam akaraṇaḥ sva-rāḍ akhila-kāraka-śakti-dharaḥ: though you have no material senses, you are the self-effulgent sustainer of everyone’s sensory powers. (SB 10.87.28) The Lord is not affected by upādhis, though he relates with upādhis by his śaktis. Tvam asi yad ātmanā samavaruddha-samasta-bhagaḥ: by your very nature you are perfectly full in all opulences. (SB 10.87.14)

According to the statement tat tejo sṛjata: he glanced and his power carried out creation (Taittirīya Upaniṣad), he created the intelligence and senses (mentioned in the present verse). Does this happen by pariṇāma (transformation of Brahman) or vivarta (illusory creation)? It takes place by his śakti since śakti is suitable as the material cause (upādāna), and since the Lord can accept the role as the efficient cause (nimitta). Thus as the

doer the Lord attains independence. Therefore, previously to his creation of material intelligence, etc., by his glance, when prakṛti was without agitation, it is understood that he had his own intelligence and other qualities.

According to the statement sa aikṣata (he glanced), when he created intelligence, etc., for birth and enjoyment of the senses (bhāvārtham, mātrārtham), he considered carefully before creating (using his intelligence). Mātrārtham means all the puruṣārthas or human goals, including taking shelter of the Lord. Sarva-kāmaḥ sarva-gandhaḥ sarva-rasa ayam ātmāpahata-pāpmā: the Lord has all desires, all fragrance, all taste and is free of sin. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad) These qualities are not imposed adventitiously upon him since it is impossible to have adventitious (material) qualities in the absolute person who is beyond material objects. Brahman is pure in all three phases of time. It is also impossible for dull matter, which is in the category of receiving imposition (upādhi), to impose itself, since it is without knowledge.

Therefore the jīva does not arise by the imposition of ignorance on Brahman. The jīva produces his own imposition by his nature of ignorance, like a person talking in his sleep, since this brings uniformity in the conclusion. Since the Vedas say the Lord is independent, claiming the Lord has imposition would be repulsive. There is a saying “It is better to stay away from mud than wash it off.” Thus it would not be suitable for the Lord to accept the imposition of ignorance and then have to destroy it. That his qualities are impositions is also contradicted by statements like “He has natural śaktis.” It would also contradict statements like śrutes tu śabda-mūlatvāt: the defects in the jīva do not apply to Braman because of the declaration of scripture; scripture is the root of knowledge about spirit. (Brhama-sūtra 2.1.27)

Claiming that imposition of qualities on Brahman produces the personal Lord (as well as the jīva) is atheism. To think that the supreme is ultimately impersonal Brahman is like thinking a man to be a pillar. This would also mean the non-existence of the Lord in the three phases of time. The ignorance produced by in man (which produces the imposition of qualities on Brahman), who is produced by his ignorance, is in the end ignorance

produced from ignorance. Meditation, another creation through ignorance, would also be useless.

Other statements also agree. Saṁjñā-mūrti-kḷptiś ca tri-vṛt kurvata upadeśāt: the creation of names and forms in groups of three is done by the creator, for that is the teaching. (Brahma-sūtra 2.4.20) Those who claim there is no God are criticized:

asatyam apratiṣṭhaṁ te jagad āhur anīśvaram
aparaspara-saṁbhūtaṁ kim anyat kāma-haitukam

They say the world is false, without a foundation, and without a creator. It arises from the innate properties of matter. It arises by lust alone. BG 16.8

Asatyam means false. Apratiṣṭhitam means what cannot be described as either real or unreal. Anīśvaram means an atheistic concoction arising from ignorance. Aparaspara-saṁbhūtaṁ means "produced from hopeless ignorance." Aparaspara means a continuous causal sequence. Kāma-haitukam means arising from mental concoction, like a dream. Such people are described as not being able to distinguish proper action from forbidden conduct. This means they do not have proper saṁskāras. Their actions and destination are also condemned:

etāṁ dṛṣṭim avaṣṭabhya naṣṭātmāno 'lpa-buddhayaḥ
prabhavanty ugra-karmāṇaḥ kṣayāya jagato 'hitāḥ

Taking shelter of these viewpoints, not understanding ātmā, believing in worthless philosophies, performing violent actions, and being hostile to the world, these men destroy spiritual truth. BG 16.9

Thus, the meaning of all the Vedas is Bhagavān (the Lord with spiritual qualities and actions). Yaṁ sarve vedā namanti mumkṣavo brahmavādinaś ca: all the Vedas, liberated souls and brahmavādis offer respecst to the Lord. (Nṛsiṁha-tāpanī Upaniṣad)

vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham

By all the Vedas, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedānta, and I am the knower of the Vedas. BG 15.15

natāḥ sma sarva-jagatām vacasāṁ pratiṣṭhā yatra śāśvatī

The words of the whole universe cannot describe the Lord, the eternal foundation. Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1.14.23

māṁ vidhatte 'bhidhatte māṁ vikalpyāpohyate tv aham
etāvān sarva-vedārthaḥ śabda āsthāya māṁ bhidām
māyā-mātram anūdyānte pratiṣidhya prasīdati

The Vedas indicate bhakti as the action and indicate me as the meaning. I am the meaning of all the Vedas. I, as karma and jñāna, am proposed and rejected as alternatives. The Vedas, taking shelter of me, proposing karma and jñāna and then rejecting them as māyā, become happy by giving the devotees bliss. SB 11.21.43

Sad eva saumyedam agra āsīt: the eternal lord existed before this universe. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.1) This indicates that the Lord is real. He is situated as the cause of everything. Ātmā vā idam agra āsīt: the Paramātmā existed before everything. (Aitareya Upaniṣad 1.1.1) He existed as Paramātmā. Satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma: the Lord is eternity, knowledge and bliss. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad) Vijñanam ānandaṁ brahma: the Lord is knowledge and bliss. (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.9.34) This is the Lord's svarūpa-lakṣaṇa or principal quality. Nirguṇaṁ nirañjanam: he is pure, without material guṇas. (SB 10.51.56) This indicates he is devoid of faults. Na tasya kāryaṁ karanāṁ ca vidyate…svābhavikī jñana-bala-kriyā ca: the Lord has innate knowledge, strength and action. (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad) Being devoid of material śakti, the Lord possesses innate śaktis of an extraordinary nature. The same is supported by statements denying the opposite.

eṣa ātmāpahatapāpmā vijaro vimṛtyur viśoko vijighatso 'pipāsaḥ satyakāmaḥ satyasaṁkalpaḥ |

One should know that ātmā is without sin, without ageing, without death, without lamentation, without hunger, without thirst, whose every desire is truth and whose every desire is fulfilled. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.1.5

nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān

He is the prime eternal among all eternals. He is the supreme living entity of all living entities, and He alone is maintaining all life. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

tam īśvarāṇāṁ paramaṁ maheśvaraṁ
taṁ devatānāṁ paramaṁ ca daivatam
sa kāraṇaṁ karaṇādhipādhipo
na cāsya kaścij janitā na cādhipaḥ

He is the great, supreme master of all controllers. He is the Supreme Lord to be worshipped. He is the first cause and the lord of the lords of the senses. He has no creator or master. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

These verses of glorification show the Lord as the cause of all causes.

ānandaṁ brahmano rūpam

The Lord has a form of bliss. Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad

vedāham etaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam
āditya-varṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt

I know that great Lord, brilliant like the sun, beyond ignorance. Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad

na sandṛśe tiṣṭhati rūpam asya na cakṣuṣā paśyati rūpam asya

His form is not within the perception of material senses. One cannot see his form with the material eye. Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad

yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vṛṇute tanuṁ svām

The Lord reveals his form to whomsoever he chooses. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.2.4

In this way, the outstanding svarūpa of the Lord has been shown. It is said eko ha vai nārāyaṇa āsīn na brahmā neśāṇaḥ: in the beginning only Nārāyaṇa existed, without Brahmā or Śiva. (Mahā-nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad) This is the position of the Lord that I have desired to illustrate.

yasya pṛthivī śarīraṁ yaḥ pṛthivīm antaro yam ayaty eṣa ta ātmāntaryāmy amṛtaḥ

He who is the ultimate proprietor of the earth and the body, and who, residing within, rules the earth, is the immortal Supreme Lord who resides in the heart. Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.7.3

yasyākṣaraṁ śarīraṁ eṣa sarvabhūtāntarātmā apahata-pāpmā divyo deva eko nārāyaṇaḥ

The one Lord without sin dwelling in all beings whose body is indestructible is Nārāyaṇa. Subala Upaniṣad

He is the ātmā of the earth because he reveals everything through his endowment of all śaktis. The Purāṇas and Mahābhārata also say the same:

hlādinī sandhinī saṁvit tvayy ekā guṇa-saṁśraye
hlāda-tāpa-karī miśrā tvayi no guṇa-varjite

In you who are the shelter of all spiritual qualities exist the energies of hlādinī, sandhinī and saṁvit. In you who are devoid of material qualities, the mixture of happiness and distress found in the material world does not exist. Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1.9.44-45

kalā-kāṣṭānimeṣādi-kāla-sūtrasya gocare
yasya śaktir na śuddhasya prasīdatu sa me harīh

The pure Lord's potency cannot be measured by the string of time, calibrated in minutes and seconds. May the Lord be merciful to us. Viṣṇu Purāṇa

jñāna-śakti-balaiśvarya-vīrya-tejāṁsy aśeṣataḥ
bhagavac-chabda-vācyāni vinā heyair guṇādibhiḥ

The word bhagavān means that he is complete with power of mind (omniscience), power of senses, power of body, influence, control, and beauty, and is devoid of all inferior qualities. Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.5.79

kalā-murhūtādi-mayaś ca kālo na yad vibhūteḥ pariṇama-hetuḥ

We do not know the the Lord who is time, made up of moments and hours and years; whose influence is the source of perpetual change. Viṣṇu Purāṇa 4.1.83

na śakyaḥ sa tvayā draṣṭum asmābhir vā bṛhaspate
yaysa prasādaṁ kurute sa vai taṁ drastum arhati

He cannot be seen by you or us, O Bṛhaspati! He can be seen by the person to whom he gives mercy. Mahābhārata

etat tvayā na vijñeyaṁ rūpavān iti dṛśyate
icchan muhūrtān naśyeyam īśo 'haṁ jagato guru
māyā hy eṣā mayā sṛṣṭā yan māṁ paśyasi nārada
sarvabhūta-guṇair yuktaṁ naivaṁ tvaṁ jñātum arhasi

You should not think that I can be seen because I have a material form. Being master and guru of the universe, by my desire I can become invisible. Nārada, you see a material form which is māyā, created by me. You should not think that I am made of material qualities and elements. Mahābhārata 12.326.42-3

These are the words from the Lord dwelling in Śvetadvīpa. The meaning is this. You should not think I am visible because I have a material form. I am seen only when I desire to show myself. By my desire, I can become invisible, since I am beyond the senses. Because I reveal myself by my will, my form is self-revealing.

It is also said:

nityāvyakto pi bhavagān īkṣate nija-śaktitaḥ
tam ṛte paramātmānaṁ kā paśyetām itam prabhum

The Lord, eternally invisible, is seen by his will. Without that, who can see the Lord, the Paramātmā? Nārāyaṇādhyātma

One who thinks that I have material qualities and form sees a form created by māyā. You should not think of me in that way. It is said kūṭastho ’kṣara ucyate: he is fixed with one form (BG 15.16) akṣaraṁ paramaṁ brahma: the Supreme Lord is without change. (BG 8.3)

yasmāt kṣaram atīto ’ham akṣarād api cottamaḥ
ato ’smi loke vede ca prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ

Because I am superior to the conditioned and liberated jīvas, I am celebrated in the Vedas and the smṛtis as the Supreme Person. BG 15.18

māṁ ca yo ’vyabhicāreṇa bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate

He who serves me alone in pure devotional service surpasses the guṇas and becomes endowed with his spiritual nature. BG 14.26

brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca

I become the ultimate, affectionate shelter of the jīva who has attained his svarūpa, who is beyond death and possesses unchanging devotion to me,

for I am the shelter of eternal qualities and extraordinary rasa for that jīva. BG 14.27

śrutayas tvayi hi phalanty atan-nirasanena bhavan-nidhanāḥ

The śrutis, following their method of eliminating everything separate from the Supreme, become successful by revealing you as their final conclusion. SB 10.87.41

tvam atha yad eṣv avaśeṣam ṛtam

You are the reality underlying them all. SB 10.87.17

tvam asi yad ātmanā samavaruddha-samasta-bhagaḥ

By your very nature you are perfectly full in all opulences. SB 10.87.14

tvam uta jahāsi tām ahir iva tvacam ātta-bhago
mahasi mahīyase 'ṣṭa-guṇite 'parimeya-bhagaḥ

You, however, avoid the material energy in the same way that a snake abandons its old skin. Glorious in your possession of eight mystic perfections, you enjoy unlimited opulences. SB 10.87.38.

bhavata upāsate 'ṅghrim abhavam bhuvi viśvasitāḥ

Learned sages become imbued with faith and worship your lotus feet, to which all Vedic sacrifices in this world are offered, and which are the source of liberation. SB 10.87.20

na parilaṣanti kecid apavargam apīśvara te
caraṇa-saroja-haṁsa-kula-saṅga-visṛṣṭa-gṛhāḥ

These rare souls, indifferent even to liberation, renounce the happiness of home and family because of their association with devotees who are like flocks of swans enjoying at the lotus of your feet. SB 10.87.21

striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyo
vayam api te samāḥ samadṛśo 'ṅghri-saroja-sudhāḥ

These women fully absorbed their minds in meditation on Kṛṣṇa's powerful arms, which are like the bodies of great serpents. We want to become just like the gopīs and render service to his lotus feet. SB 10.87.23

These verses will be explained in their appropriate places. Faults cannot be ascribed to the Vedas as with the meaning of ordinary words, since the

Lord who is beyond matter is the subject of the Vedas, since the very intent of the Vedas is to point out his supreme position, since he alone is to be known by the Vedas, and since he is thus the obvious object proved by the Vedas. The śrutis say this:

tvayi hi phalanty atan-nirasanena bhavan-nidhanāḥ

The śrutis, following their method of eliminating everything separate from the Supreme, become successful by revealing you as their final conclusion. SB 10.87.41

Thus the Vedas conclude that Bhagavān is supreme. Statements of oneness (tat tvam asi), statements of negation (asthūla), which are considered mahā-vākyas, and statements concerning upāsana are made to harmonize in my concept of Brahman.

According to impersonalists, words used in a primary or secondary way (mukhya and gauṇa) cannot describe impersonal Brahman. Lakṣaṇa also cannot describe impersonal Brahman. With these restrictions, inference is also not possible. But the Lord can be directly indicated since he has a svarūpa. How can the impersonal (with form and qualities) be described by taking the direct or indirect meaning of words (jahat and ajahat lakṣanā)? As mentioned previously, there will be fault even by taking the general meaning of words.

(use of words)

By mistakenly attributing shell for silver, one mistakenly thinks of a relationship by attribution since without that condition one would not produce the error. To make attribution upon an attribution (shell also being nonexistent) would lead to an infinite regress. Attribution cannot take place when objects are completely beyond words or conception. Even if it were possible that the object Brahman could be the subject of attribution, such as descriptions by words, would it necessarily be a temporary imposition, as the case of the rope and illusion of a snake?

(oneness of jīva and the Lord)

Some consider the difference between jīva and the Lord to be conditional, due to upādhi. This has been discussed on the commentary concerning Brahmā's prayers. This is also explained in the Śri-vaiṣṇava commentary on

the Brahma-sūtras, in Śata-dūṣaṇi and in Tattva-vāda works like Viṣṇu-tattva-prakāśika and Nyāyāmṛta. I have dealt with this in detail in the commentary on Bhāgavata-sandarbha, which depends somewhat on their views.

Since the root cause of the difference is ignorance, it is acceptable to say that oneness of tat and tvam is realized by knowledge. One should not think however that the existence of the jīva is somehow produced by someone's ignorance since it is impossible for Brahman which is pure consciousness to be the shelter of ignorance or to be made ignorant (by something) to create the jīva. One should also not think that the Lord is produced by the jīva's ignorance and is composed of material vidyā. He is not the subject (supposedly being a jīva) of this ignorance or object of another jīva's ignorance. It is also claimed that the jīva is produced as a jīva by the ignorance of the jīva, but this has the fault of a cause producing itself (jīva causing the jīva's existence). Thus the meaning of apposition of tat and tvam or ātmā and Brahman is as follows:

A word used as lakṣaṇā does not equate the identity of an object with something else but simply, by that word, speaks of another object or condition. For instance, take the statements – "The lotus is blue," "This bank is the Gaṅgā," or "This person is Devadatta." "Person" denotes remembrance with particulars of previous times. "This" indicates the person seen at this time. This is the apposition of the words "this" and "person" (since they indicate the same object). It is not lakṣaṇā. The case of tat and tvam also is not lakṣaṇā or gauṇa-vṛtti.

In both these cases, one establishes qualities in an object as in the statement "This bell metal pot is golden." Thus, in the śruti statement yasyātmā śarīram: his body is his self (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.7.22), in the context of speaking of the controller and the place (such as the sun god and his globe, Gaṅgā ānd her waves, etc.), non-difference is stated (though not literally true).

(jīva is is one with and different from the Lord)

imās tisro devatā anena jivenātmanānupraviśya nāma-rupe vyakaravanit

Now I shall enter these three splendid elements with the individual souls and thus I shall create names and forms. Chandogya Upaniṣad

These are the words of the mahā-puruṣa. The jīva is mentioned separately, as an aṁśa of the Lord (not as identical with the Lord):

mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manaḥ-ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati

This eternal jīva, one of my parts, drags with it the senses and the sixth sense called the mind, which are the products of ahaṅkāra in prakṛti. BG 15.7

apareyam itas tv anyāṁ prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat

This is my inferior energy. But understand my superior energy which is different from this inferior energy. It is the jīvas, who employ the inferior energy for their enjoyment. BG 7.5

Here the jīva is called superior prakṛti. By making this statement, though there is a difference between the Lord and the jīva, non-difference is understood because of the inherent connection between them like the sun and its light particles, which appear to be one. Because of experiencing oneness with the Supreme Lord by realizing their purity, persons desiring liberation achieve rejection of the material body. That is the goal of such statements (tat tvam asi—you are that) for them.

However, the devotees worship the Lord by realizing their eternal relationship with him (like the ray with the sun).

iti nṛ-gatiṁ vivicya kavayo nigamāvapanaṁ
bhavata upāsate ’ṅghrim abhavam bhuvi viśvasitāḥ

Having determined this to be the status of the living entity, learned sages become imbued with faith and worship your lotus feet, to which all Vedic sacrifices in this world are offered, and which are the source of liberation. SB 10.87.20

By this one can realize that the Supreme Lord is the highest goal of human endeavor, the source of prema. This realization is rarely understood.

na parilaṣanti kecid apavargam apīśvara te
caraṇa-saroja-haṁsa-kula-saṅga-visṛṣṭa-gṛhāḥ

These rare souls, indifferent even to liberation, renounce the happiness of home and family because of their association with devotees who are like flocks of swans enjoying at the lotus of your feet. SB 10.87.21

After Brahmā's prayers, Śukadeva also answered similarly in reply to Parīkṣit's question.

Someone may raise the following point. "It seems proper that the goal of the statement 'You are that,' which is a mahā-vākya, is oneness of jīva and Brahman (taking the direct meaning). Reliance on external proofs using statements containing lakṣaṇā would naturally result in a secondary meaning with the nullification of what was to be proved. As well the śrutis themselves agree with the mahā-vākyas. Other scriptural statements which seem contrary can be rejected because of not being mahā-vākyas and having contextual meaning only. They should all be accepted only with a secondary meaning."

In reply to this, it can be said that one word can have a gauṇa meaning (but not all the statements of a work like Gītā). However, "When the most excellent persons are present, even a great person becomes ashamed." One should follow the mukhya meaning as far as possible. The devas follow this path. There should be no shame in speaking the real meaning. Thus knowledge of the oneness of the jīva and the Lord or impersonal Brahman is not the meaning of all the Vedas or its final conclusion since that is rejected and the meaning is shown to be Bhagavān.

According to claimants, statements of negation like "It is without substance (asthūlam)" or "Not this, not this (neti neti)", point out that Brahman is beyond words and mind. That much is true. That which is temporary cannot make known impersonal Brahman. Therefore the intent of those statements is to deny material qualities to Brahman in order to show that the Brahman has—at the same time as having no material qualities—a variety of spiritual qualities. That is the intention of neha nānāsti kiñcana: there is nothing here and thus no (material) variety exists in Brahman. The intention is to express the unity of ātmā. Otherwise the meaning could be "Nothing exists here and variety does not exist here." With either meaning, because of the oneness of the Lord's qualities, the meaning again becomes

a Lord with spiritual qualities. There is no indication of impersonalism in Brahman. The prayers of the Veda confirm this:

jaya jaya jahy ajām ajita doṣa-gṛbhīta-guṇāṁ
tvam asi yad ātmanā samavaruddha-samasta-bhagaḥ

Victory, victory to You, O unconquerable one! By your very nature you are perfectly full in all qualities. SB 10.87.14

This is because there is nothing inferior in the svarūpa-śakti. The prayers conclude in the same way:

dyu-pataya eva te na yayur antam anantatayā
tvam api yad-antarāṇḍa-nicayā nanu sāvaraṇāḥ

Because you are unlimited, neither the lords of heaven nor even you yourself can ever reach the end of your glories. SB 10.87.41

If the prayers were to indicate impersonal Brahman, the prayers would glorify oneness with Brahman. Rather, verse 21 says that rare souls give up such impersonal liberation for bhakti. Bhakti is praised. According to this Vedic statement yad vidhīyate tad eva stūyate: "what is established is praised," Bhagavān is the meaning of the prayers. I believe that this meaning cannot be understood and proved simply by statements like tat tvam asi. Rather, the meaning is understood only by the (descriptions of) the highest bliss:

duravagamātma-tattva-nigamāya tavātta-tanoś
carita-mahāmṛtābdhi-parivarta-pariśramaṇāḥ
na parilaṣanti kecid apavargam apīśvara te
caraṇa-saroja-haṁsa-kula-saṅga-visṛṣṭa-gṛhāḥ

My Lord, some fortunate souls have gotten relief from the fatigue of material life by diving into the vast nectar ocean of your pastimes, which you enact when you manifest your personal forms to propagate the unfathomable science of the self. These rare souls, indifferent even to liberation, renounce the happiness of home and family because of their association with devotees who are like flocks of swans enjoying at the lotus of your feet. SB 10.87.21

(oṁ as the main statement)

Though some regard tat tvam asi, etc., as the main statements of the Vedas, it is said that the seed of the Vedas is praṇava, which explains the appearance of the Vedas, which serve as their own proof. Vedaḥ praṇava evāgre: in Satya-yuga the undivided Veda is expressed by the syllable oṁ. (SB 11.17.11) The syllables combine together with great effect because they indicate the comprehensive meaning of the Vedas. Therefore praṇava is the main word in the Vedas, and directly indicates Bhagavān.

amātro'nanta-mātraś ca dvaitasyopaśamaḥ śivaḥ
oṁkāro vidito yena sa munir netaro janaḥ

That man is a sage and no other who knows oṁkāra, without syllables, with infinite syllables, that destroys duality and is all auspicious. Māṇḍūkya-kārikā 26-29

It is one form without divisions (amātraḥ), but infinite because it represents all the Vedas. It eliminates duality since, by indicating only Bhagavān, it destroys all other ideas. It is most suitable since it indicates Bhagavān who is the cause of all qualification. It is considered the Veda because it indicates all Vedas. It directly explains the Vedas. Oṁ ity etad brahmaṇo nediṣṭam nāma: oṁ is the name closest to Brahman. (Ṛg Veda) The word nediṣṭam means very close, without space between. Thus it is said oṁ viśvaṁ viṣṇuḥ: Viṣṇu is called the universe and oṁ. (Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma)

sva-dhāmno brāhmaṇaḥ sākṣād vācakaḥ paramātmanaḥ
sa sarva-mantropaniṣad veda-bījaṁ sanātanam

Oṁ indicates Brahman, which is its own shelter, and as well indicates Paramātmā and Bhagavān. Oṁ contains all mantras and Upaniṣads and it is the eternal cause of the Vedas. SB 12.6.4

tato 'bhūt tri-vṛd oṁkāro yo 'vyakta-prabhavaḥ sva-rāṭ
yat tal liṅgaṁ bhagavato brahmaṇaḥ paramātmanaḥ

From nāda arose the oṁkāra composed of three sounds and whose origin is unclear. Oṁ is directly the Supreme Lord and causes realization of Bhagavān, Paramātmā and Brahman. SB 12.6.39

Bhagavān is the cause of qualification for everything else (including liberation):

dṛtaya iva śvasanty asu-bhṛto yadi te ’nuvidhā

Only if they become your faithful followers are those who breathe actually alive, otherwise their breathing is like that of a bellows. SB 10.87.17

yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśānte mahātmanaḥ

The meaning of scripture is revealed to the person who has devotion to the guru as much as he has devotion to the Lord. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23

yā vai sādhana-sampattiḥ puruṣārtha-catuṣṭaye
tayā vinā tad āpnoti naro nārāyaṇāśrayaḥ.

A person who takes shelter of Nārāyaṇa attains the four goals of life. He does not need to perform any other spiritual activities other than taking shelter of the Lord. (Mokṣa-dharma, Mahābhārata)

sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate ’ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati

Perfecting life is easily achieved by my devotee through loving service unto me. If somehow or other my devotee desires promotion to heaven, liberation, or residence in my abode, he easily achieves such benedictions. SB 11.20.33

Thus the idea that jīva is Brahman because liberation is supposed to be the goal is defeated.

sattvaṁ rajas tama iti prakṛter guṇās tair
yuktaḥ paraḥ puruṣa eka ihāsya dhatte
sthity-ādaye hari-viriñci-hareti saṁjñāḥ
śreyāṁsi tatra khalu sattva-tanor nṛṇāṁ syuḥ

The one supreme puruṣa, accepting the guṇas of prakṛti known as sattva, rajas and tamas, for creation, maintenance and destruction, is called Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva. The best results for the devotees will come from Viṣṇu with śuddha-sattva body. SB 1.2.23

The Lord, in charge of creation, maintenance and destruction, is established as worthy of worship by all people and by the Vedas pervaded by oṁ. For the protection of the jīvas (janānām) who were under the shelter of only the Lord during pralaya, for the jīva’s enjoyment in this life

(mātrārtham), for their enjoyment in other births (bhavārtham), for their attaining the state of the pure ātmā, liberation during ātyantika-pralaya (destruction of subtle body), and for the state of absence of material ideas (akalpanāya), where one worships purely with prema, the Lord created the intelligence and senses. Therefore Kapila has said:

jñāna-yogaś ca man-niṣṭho nairguṇyo bhakti-lakṣaṇaḥ
dvayor apy eka evārtho bhagavac-chabda-lakṣaṇaḥ

The goal of jñāna, fixed on my expansion as Brahman, beyond the guṇas, and the goal of bhakti are actually only one goal, which is known by the word Bhagavān. SB 3.32.32

yathendriyaiḥ pṛthag-dvārair artho bahu-guṇāśrayaḥ
eko nāneyate tadvad bhagavān śāstra-vartmabhiḥ

Just as one object, the substrate of many qualities, is perceived by the various senses in various ways, so Bhagavān is perceived variously by the various scriptural practices. SB 3.32.33

Śukadeva thus says to Parīkṣit, “It is good that you have said that Bhagavān, in his full manifestation, is not impersonal.” That will be made known by the beginning and concluding statements of the personified śrutis.

There are two types of brahmavādis. One type says that Brahman transforms into duality (jīva and distinct forms) by ignorance, like thinking a shell is silver. This was already refuted by logic with statements like śrutes tu śabda-mūlatvāt spoken by Vyāsa. Such persons are actually materialistic atheists. The other type, though claiming belief in the Lord without specific bhakti, cannot accept the individual form of the Lord with eternity, knowledge and bliss and consider Bhagavān to be without a form. They worship him with that conception. They realize this impersonal aspect by the śakti given by the Lord using their intelligence and senses. Matsya has said:

madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca paraṁ brahmeti śabditam
vetsyasy anugṛhītaṁ me sampraśnair vivṛtaṁ hṛdi

By my mercy, you will realize my power known as the impersonal Brahman, which will be disclosed in your heart through questions and answers. SB 8.24.38

Though the difference is expressed in the verse, the impersonal aspect is designed as “power.” This indicates a localized manifestation of the Lord (madīyam). His full manifestation is indicated in the form of Bhagavān with a particular, powerful form. Dhruva said:

yā nirvṛtis tanu-bhṛtāṁ tava pāda-padma-
dhyānād bhavaj-jana-kathā-śravaṇena vā syāt
sā brahmaṇi sva-mahimany api nātha mā bhūt
kiṁ tv antakāsi-lulitāt patatāṁ vimānāt

The bliss for your servant available from meditating on your lotus feet or from hearing about your pastimes from the devotees is not available in your form of greatness known as Brahman, what to speak of the happiness for those who fall from the pleasures of Svarga. SB 4.9.10

The result of worshiping impersonal Brahman—realization of oneself as pure ātmā or attaining similar svarūpaform and powers--—is not considered significant.

The Lord is called indescribable since he is beyond normal manifestations and has non-material form and qualities. The śakti given by the Lord by which one can realize the Lord arises from a relationship with the śrutis called the Upaniṣads which support the spiritual form and qualities of the Lord. Taṁ tv aupaniṣadaṁ puruṣaṁ prcchāmi: I ask about the Lord who is realized through the Upaniṣads. (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad)

It will be said after the prayers:

ity etad varṇitaṁ rājan yan naḥ praśnaḥ kṛtas tvayā
yathā brahmaṇy anirdeśye nīrguṇe ’pi manaś caret

Thus I have replied to the question you asked me, O King, concerning how the mind can have access to the Absolute Truth, which is indescribable by material words and devoid of material qualities. SB 10.87.49

This refers to being able to understand the qualities of the Lord not revealed in the twenty-eight verses recited by the śrutis, what to speak of understanding the qualities revealed there. Or previously Kṛṣṇa said that the brāhmaṇas were the personification of the Vedas, and that he was the personification of the devatās. The Lord himself said that he is proved by all the Vedas. Now Parīkṣit understands that Kṛṣṇa Svayam Bhagavān is also

Brahman. Gūḍhaṁ parabrahma manuṣya-liṅgam: Kṛṣṇa is secretly the para-brahman in human form. (SB 7.10.48) Yan mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam: Kṛṣṇa, the complete, eternal Supreme Brahman, has become their friend. (SB 10.14.32) In the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad it is said katham asyāvatārasya brahmatā bhavati: how can this avatāra be Brahman? Brahman, taken in a non-metaphorical sense, means "the greatest in qualities and form." How can Kṛṣṇa be Brahman, since that is devoid of some portions and thus imperfect? That was the Rādhā's question in the Gopāla-tāpanī. It was suitable for Śukadeva to take up the proposal of Parīkṣit at this point, since for that purpose Parīkṣit began hearing the Tenth Canto. Śukadeva also will accept the statements affirming full dedication to Kṛṣṇa stated by the śrutis, who are gurus in the succession of most knowledgeable person.

striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyo
vayam api te samāḥ samadṛśo 'ṅghri-saroja-sudhāḥ

These women fully absorbed their minds in meditation on Kṛṣṇa's powerful arms, which are like the bodies of great serpents. We want to become just like the gopīs and render service to his lotus feet. SB 10.87.23

After hearing, Nārada also offered respects to Nārāyaṇa, thinking of him as non-different from Kṛṣṇa.

namas tasmai bhagavate kṛṣṇāyāmala-kīrtaye
yo dhatte sarva-bhūtānām abhavāyośatīḥ kalāḥ

I offer my obeisances to mim of spotless fame, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who manifests His all-attractive personal expansions so that all living beings can achieve liberation. SB 10.87.46

At the conclusion, he confirmed the intentions of Parīkṣit who said at the beginning of the Tenth Canto:

drauṇy-astra-vipluṣṭam idaṁ mad-aṅgaṁ
santāna-bījaṁ kuru-pāṇḍavānām
jugopa kukṣiṁ gata ātta-cakro
mātuś ca me yaḥ śaraṇaṁ gatāyāḥ
vīryāṇi tasyākhila-deha-bhājām
antar bahiḥ pūruṣa-kāla-rūpaiḥ

prayacchato mṛtyum utāmṛtaṁ ca
māyā-manuṣyasya vadasva vidvan

Because my mother surrendered unto Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, the Lord, Sudarśana-cakra in hand, entered her womb and saved my body, the body of the last remaining descendant of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas, which was almost destroyed by the fiery weapon of Aśvatthāmā. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, appearing within and outside of all materially embodied living beings by his own potency in the forms of eternal time—that is, as Paramātmā and as virāṭ-rūpa—gave liberation to everyone, either as cruel death or as life. Kindly enlighten me by describing his transcendental characteristics. SB 10.1.6

Doubting the conclusion of the Vedas however, at the beginning of this chapter, Parīkṣit inquires in these verses. He does not inquire directly about Kṛṣṇa however, but asks a general question which will include his objective, since he thought "Why to reveal my particular inquiry?"

The prayers begin (upakrama) with the words jaya jaya. Jaya is repeated in order to show the supreme position of Kṛṣṇa as the conquerer and finally show his extraordinary qualities. The śrutis conclude (upasaṁhara) as follows:

tvayi hi phalanty atan-nirasanena bhavan-nidhanāḥ

The śrutis, following their method of eliminating everything separate from the Supreme, become successful by revealing as their final conclusion. SB 10.87.41

Brahmā in his prayers makes a similar statement:

antar-bhave 'nanta bhavantam eva
hy atat tyajanto mṛgayanti santaḥ

O unlimited Lord, the saintly devotees seek you out within their own bodies by rejecting everything separate from you. SB 10.14.28

It is said that it is impossible to describe or define the indefinable Brahman (brahmaṇy anirdeśye) with unlimited form and qualities, even to a small degree, since his form is hidden from everyone, being internal. The śrutis are limited--—directed externally towards the senses. How can they speak,

using the mukhya-vṛtti, direct meaning of words (sāksāt), about (caranti) that Brahman?

Yato vaco nivartante: words cannot describe him. (Tattirīya Upaniṣad) Viṣṇor nu kaṁ vīryāṇi pravocam: how can one speak of the powers of Viṣṇu? (Ṛg Veda 1.2.154.1) Yad vācānabhyuditam yena vāg abhydyate: he cannot be described by words, but words appear because of him. (Kena Upaniṣad) Bhejur mukunda-padavīṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām: they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, which one should seek by Vedic knowledge. (SB 10.47.61) Adyāpi yat-pada-rajaḥ śruti-mṛgyam eva: the dust of his lotus feet is sought by the Vedas. (SB 10.14.34)

He cannot be described because his qualities are not material. Thus later it will be said:

harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ
sa sarva-dṛg upadraṣṭā taṁ bhajan nirguṇo bhavet

Kṛṣṇa, however, has no connection with the material modes. He is the Supreme Lord, the all-seeing eternal witness, who is transcendental to material nature. One who worships him becomes similarly free from the material modes. SB 10.88.5

sattvādayo na santīśe yatra ca prākṛtā guṇāḥ
sa śuddhaḥ sarva-śuddhebhyaḥ pumān ādhyaḥ prasīdatu

The material qualities such as sattva do not exist in the Lord. May the preeminent Lord who is purer than all pure beings be pleased with me! Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1.9.43

māṁ bhajanti guṇāḥ sarve nirguṇaṁ nirapekṣakam
suhṛdaṁ priyam ātmānaṁ sāmyāsaṅgādayo ’guṇāḥ

All superior transcendental qualities, such as being beyond the modes of nature, detached, the well-wisher, the most dear, the Supersoul, equally situated everywhere, and free from material entanglement—all such qualities, free from the transformations of material qualities, find their shelter and worshipable object in me. SB 11.13.40

In the above verse nirguṇam means “not touched by material guṇas.” Aguṇāḥ means “forms not produced by transformation of material guṇas.”

It is said in the First Canto ete cānye ca bhagavan nityā yatra mahā-guṇāḥ: these and other qualities are eternally present in the Lord. (SB 1.16.29) Since those qualities are eternal, they are spiritual. It was stated previously that the śrutis prove Bhagavān. One should also say that they do this directly, otherwise how could the qualities be called the most auspicious? They are also accepted as self-proved, and their truth is demonstrated in the Bhāgavatam. Thus both parties and especially you (Śukadeva), knoweldgeable of the greatness of the Lord's name and form, should respect the Vedas as direct evidence. Otherwise I would not ask the question. I ask "By what method do the Vedas directly speak about Brahman?" Please tell me that method.

This is resolved by Śukadeva in the second verse. The Lord created intelligence and the senses for understanding the Vedas (mātrārtham), which know the Lord's qualities and activities beyond the guṇas (mātra derived from =mmīyante=to know), for the jīvas who are of great variety, and appear as humans (janānām) who were merged with prakṛti into the Lord during mahā-pralaya. He created the intelligence and senses for the jīvas' prosperity (bhāvārtham) so that they can attain enjoyment on planets up to Brahmaloka, for revealing the nature of jīva (ātmane) and for understanding the nature of the Bhagavān, who is devoid of the functions of māyā (akalpanāya). Varuṇa has said:

namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate brahmaṇe paramātmane
na yatra śrūyate māyā loka-sṛṣṭi-vikalpanā

My obeisances unto Bhagavān, Paramātmā and Brahman within whom there is no trace of the illusory energy, which orchestrates the creation of this world. SB 10.28.6

On considering the meanings using intelligence and senses, there is always unclarity with the two different meanings (impersonal and personal) but these ultimately become one meaning—Bhagavān, from lack of satisfaction with the former and excellence of the latter (in terms of proof and taste).

bhagavān brahma kārtsnyena trir anvīkṣya manīṣayā
tad adhyavasyat kūṭa-stho ratir ātman yato bhavet

The unchanging Lord reviewed three times the Vedas completely with his intelligence, and determined that process which produces prema in the

self. SB 2.2.34

Previously also it was said yaṁ sarve vedā namanti: all the Vedas offer respects to the Lord. (Nṛsiṁha-pūrva-tāpanī Upaniṣad)

The meaning of the present verse is this. In order to maintain the Vedas, the Lord created intelligence and senses, for the purpose of bhāva, etc. He made the intelligence and senses suitable for understanding the Vedas and for understanding the Lord. The śrutis by their nature also purify the intelligence and senses by being heard, just as mantras by their nature have inherent powers. The Upaniṣads by their nature possess śakti of abhidhā or conveying the direct meaning of the Lord by their words, since they are empowered by one portion of the Lord. The karma-kāṇḍa portions of the Vedas possess the power of performance of the Lord's orders, being empowered by another portion of the Lord. These two powers are again of two types: the part supported by qualities of the Lord's māyā and the part supported by qualities of his svarūpa. His māyā qualities are inferior to those of his svarūpa.

Though his svarūpa exists in the forms of ātmā, Paramātmā, Brahman and Bhagavān, his svarūpa as Bhagavān is the highest. Kṛṣṇam enam avehi tvam ātmānam akhilātmanām: you should know Kṛṣṇa to be the original soul of all living entities. (SB 10.14.55) Viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat: with a single fragment of myself I pervade and support this entire universe. (BG 10.42) Brahmano hi pratiṣṭhāham: I am the basis of the Brahman. (BG 14.27) Yasmāt kṣaram atīto 'ham: I am above the temporary world (BG 15.18) Therefore the śrutis directly declare Bhagavān by indicating his supreme position. Others statements agree, and statements supporting karma are rejected as the goal.

traiguṇya-viṣayā vedāḥ nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho niryoga-kṣema ātmavān

The Vedas mainly deal with the subject of the three modes of material nature. Rise above these modes, O Arjuna. Be transcendental to all of them. Be free from all dualities and from all anxieties for gain and safety, and be established in the self. BG 2.45

Futhermore praṇava is indicated as the supreme mahā-vākya:

sva-dhāmno brāhmaṇaḥ sākṣād vācakaḥ paramātmanaḥ
sa sarva-mantropaniṣad veda-bījaṁ sanātanam

Oṁ indicates Brahman, which is its own shelter, and as well indicates Paramātmā and Bhagavān. Oṁ contains all mantras and Upaniṣads and it is the eternal cause of the Vedas. SB 12.6.41

Other śrutis speak of ātmā and māyā, using negative terms, in order to teach about the Lord step by step. The śrutis say kvacid ajayātmanā ca carato ’nucaren nigamaḥ: sometimes the Vedas can recognize you as you sport with your material and spiritual potencies. (SB 10.87.14) This is explained in Brahmā’s prayers.

antar-bhave ’nanta bhavantam eva
hy atat tyajanto mṛgayanti santaḥ

O unlimited Lord, the saintly devotees seek you out within their own bodies by rejecting everything separate from you. SB 10.14.28

In the rāsa dance, it is said manorathāntaṁ śrutayo yathā yayuḥ: the gopīs, like the personified Vedas before them, felt their desires completely fulfilled. (SB 10.32.13) Bhejur mukunda-padavīṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām: they take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, which one should seek by Vedic knowledge. (SB 10.47.61) Thus the śrutis directly speak of Bhagavān. What more can be said?

The gopīs attract the Lord, not by speaking of knowledge and matter, but by chanating his name and mantras. Nāma-vyāharaṇaṁ viṣṇor yatas tad-viṣayā matiḥ: simply by chanting the holy name of Lord Viṣṇu, such sinful persons attract the attention of the Supreme Lord. (SB 6.2.10) By chanting the name of the Lord, one’s mind concentrates on the Lord. Sadyo hṛdy avarudhyate ’tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat-kṣaṇāt: the Supreme Lord becomes immediately captured in the heart of the accomplished devotees by hearing Bhāgavatam and even by those who have suddenly developed a desire to hear it. (SB 1.1.2)

madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānāṁ
sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam
sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛguvara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma

The name of Kṛṣṇa is sweeter than the sweetest, the most auspicious of all things auspicious, the highest fruit in the tree of all the Vedas, and is composed entirely of pure consciousness. O best of Bhṛgu's dynasty! Heard once with faith or in negligence, it can deliver any human being. Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa, Padma Purāṇa

vyaktaṁ hi bhagavān eva sākṣān nārāyaṇaḥ svayam
aṣṭākṣara svarūpeṇa mukheṣu parivartate

Bhagavān, directly Nārāyaṇa, appears on the tongue in the form of the eight-syllable mantra. Nārada Pañcaratra

oṁ āsya jānanto nāma cid vivaktan mahas te viṣṇo su-matiṁ bhajāmahe

You, who know the Lord's name oṁ is spiritual, should chant it. Ṛg Veda 1.156.3

praṇavo hy apare brahma pravaṇaś ca paraṁ smṛtam

The syllable oṁ is the lower and higher Brahman. Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad Kārikā of Gauḍapāda

Yato vāco nivartante: words cannot describe the Lord. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad) The śrutis, famous among the people for speaking of the unlimited Lord, thus speak. They will say dyupataya eva te na yayur antam anantatayā: you are unlimited, and no one has estimated the extent of your potencies. (SB 10.87.41) Ka iha nu veda batāvara-janma-layo 'gra-saraṁ: how can anyone here know the Lord who existed prior to everything else? (SB 10.87.24)

Text 87.3

saiṣā hy upaniṣad brāhmī pūrveśāṁ pūrva-jair dhṛtā
śraddhayā dhārayed yas tāṁ kṣemaṁ gacched akiñcanaḥ

Those who came first among the previous sages meditated upon this same Upaniṣad. Anyone who faithfully concentrates on this knowledge will become free from material attachments and attain the final goal of life.

COMMENTARY: He proves his previous statement and praises the knowledge. The two previous verses (sā brāhmī), a question and answer, become an Upaniṣad. By the two verses, an Upaniṣad appears. By the two verses the Upaniṣad was not recently produced however, because this

knowledge was held in the minds by the Kumāras (pūrvajaiḥ) who appeared before Nārada and others (pūrveṣām). Or, the following verses (sā) starting with jaya jaya to be spoken, are an Upaniṣad. The person will attain the lotus feet of the Lord (kṣemam).

martyo mṛtyu-vyāla-bhītaḥ palāyan
lokān sarvān nirbhayaṁ nādhyagacchat
tvat pādābjaṁ prāpya yadṛcchayādya
susthaḥ śete mṛtyur asmād apaiti

No one in this material world, fearful of the snake of time, has become free from fear, even by fleeing to various planets. But now that you have appeared, death is fleeing in fear of you, and the living entities, having obtained shelter at your lotus feet by your mercy, are fearless and tranquil. SB 10.3.27

Text 87.4

atra te varṇayiṣyāmi gāthāṁ nārāyaṇānvitām
nāradasya ca saṁvādam ṛṣer nārāyaṇasya ca

In this connection I will relate to you a narration concerning Kṛṣṇa. It is about a conversation that once occurred between Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi and Nārada Muni.

COMMENTARY: In this connection I will relate a story which happened long ago. The story concerns Nārāyaṇa (nārāyaṇānvitām), the shelter of the three puruṣas who create mahat-tattva and who is the shelter of all jīvas. This refers to Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, the real Nārāyaṇa, as expressed by Brahmā in SB 10.14.14. Thus this story is consistent with thea beginning and conclusion concerning (anvitām) Kṛṣṇa. Since Nārada, a great devotee was involved, this story glorifies the Lord and is conclusive. He is described in the next verse as “dear to the Lord.” This story is in the form of a conversation between Nārada and the sage Nārāyaṇa. This excludes Nārāyaṇa of the spiritual world and Nārāyaṇa residing in the Milk Ocean.

Text 87.5

ekadā nārado lokān paryaṭan bhagavat-priyaḥ
sanātanam ṛṣiṁ draṣṭuṁ yayau nārāyaṇāśramam

Once, while traveling among the various planets of the universe, the Lord's beloved devotee Nārada went to visit the primeval sage Nārāyaṇa at his hermitage

COMMENTARY: Nārāyaṇa was the eternal Supreme Lord, son of Dharma (ṛṣim). Nārada went to his place in Badarikāśrama.

Text 87.6

yo vai bhārata-varṣe 'smin kṣemāya svastaye nṛṇām
dharma-jñāna-śamopetam ā-kalpād āsthitas tapaḥ

From the very beginning of Brahmā's day Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi has been undergoing austere penances in this land of Bhārata while perfectly performing contemplation on the Lord, knowledge of the Lord and bhakti-yoga for the benefit of human beings in both this world and the next.

COMMENTARY: This verse shows the reason why he is called a sage, and describes pastimes of compassion.

He was situated in austerity – his sva-dharma, endowed with jñāna, dharma and śama in order to teach the people, for gaining auspiciousness in this life (kṣemāya) and future life (maṅgalāya).

Dharma means processes suitable for bhakti. Jñāna means knowledge of the Lord. Śama means contemplation of the Lord. He was so engaged from the beginning of Brahmā's day.

Text 87.7

tatropaviṣṭam ṛṣibhiḥ kalāpa-grāma-vāsibhiḥ
parītaṁ praṇato 'pṛcchad idam eva kurūdvaha

There Nārada approached Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, who was sitting amidst sages of the village of Kalāpa. After bowing down to the Lord, O hero of the Kurus, Nārada asked him the very same question you have asked me.

COMMENTARY: At the sage's hermitage, Nārada met him as he sat, devoid of disturbance of heart, giving the opportunity for questions. He was surrounded by sages of a similar mind. This indicates his question was of great significance.

Text 87.8

tasmai hy avocad bhagavān ṛṣīṇāṁ śṛṇvatām idam
yo brahma-vādaḥ pūrveṣāṁ jana-loka-nivāsinām

As the sages listened, Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi related to Nārada an ancient discussion about the Vedas that took place among the residents of Janaloka.

COMMENTARY: The other sages listened with attention (the phrase with śṛṇvatām should be in the locative rather than the possessive case). An ancient discussion to determine the truth (vāda), rather than jalpa or vitaṇḍa took place concerning the Vedas (brahma). Janaloka means the planet above Maharloka. It may also be called Janoloka.

Text 87.9

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
svāyambhuva brahma-satraṁ jana-loke 'bhavat purā
tatra-sthānāṁ mānasānāṁ munīnām ūrdhva-retasām

The Lord said: O son of self-born Brahmā, once long ago on Janaloka, wise sages who resided there performed a great sacrifice concerning the Vedas. These sages, mental sons of Brahmā, were all perfect celibates.

COMMENTARY: O Nārada, son of Brahmā! The sages were engaged in a sacrifice concerning knowledge of the Vedas. Since that discussion was similar to this, you are qualified to hear about it. These sages were the mental sons of Brahmā, and therefore very pure. They were dedicated to contemplation on the Lord (munīnām) and were brahmacārīs since birth. Thus they were also qualified for the discussion concerning the Vedas.

Text 87.10

śvetadvīpaṁ gatavati tvayi draṣṭuṁ tad-īśvaram
brahma-vādaḥ su-saṁvṛttaḥ śrutayo yatra śerate
tatra hāyam abhūt praśnas tvaṁ māṁ yam anupṛcchasi

At that time you happened to be visiting the Lord on Śvetadvīpa. A lively discussion fully endowed with the Vedas arose among the sages on Janaloka as to the nature of the Supreme Absolute Truth. The same question arose then that you are asking me now.

COMMENTARY: On Janaloka (tatra) the same question was asked that you have asked me--—long after they asked (anu). Since you asked me later, there is no reason to doubt the validity of your question. This is praise for Nārada's question. Śerate means "fully endowed with."

Text 87.11

tulya-śruta-tapaḥ-śīlās tulya-svīyāri-madhyamāḥ
api cakruḥ pravacanam ekaṁ śuśrūṣavo 'pare

Although these sages were all equally qualified in terms of concentration on the Vedas, and although they all saw friends, enemies and neutral parties equally, they chose one among them of their number to be the speaker, and the rest became eager listeners.

COMMENTARY: Tapas means the ability to concentrate the mind. Pravacanam means "speaker" rather than "speaking."

Text 87.12–13

śrī-sanandana uvāca
sva-sṛṣṭam idam āpīya śayānaṁ saha śaktibhiḥ
tad-ante bodhayāṁ cakrus tal-liṅgaiḥ śrutayaḥ param
yathā śayānaṁ saṁrājaṁ vandinas tat-parākramaiḥ
pratyūṣe 'bhetya su-ślokair bodhayanty anujīvinaḥ

Śrī Sanandana replied: After Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa withdrew the created universes along with the puruṣāvatāras, he remained inattentive to universal affairs as if sleeping. After this, the śrutis reawakened him to the job of creation using words indicating his powers, just as the poets serving a king approach him at dawn and awaken him by reciting his heroic deeds.

COMMENTARY: The description begins, and will similarly conclude, with the Lord who is defined by the Vedas, not as impersonal Brahman but the Lord with qualities, uncontaminated by māyā.

yo 'syotprekṣaka ādi-madhya-nidhane yo 'vyakta-jīveśvaro
yaḥ sṛṣṭvedam anupraviśya ṛṣiṇā cakre puraḥ śāsti tāḥ

He is the Lord who eternally watches over this universe, who exists before, during and after its manifestation. He is the master of both the unmanifest

material energy and the spirit soul. After sending forth the creation he enters within it, accompanying each living entity. SB 10.87.50

Sva-sṛṣṭam means that the Lord is the material cause (upādāna) of the universe. It is dependent on him. He drank up completely (ā-pitvā) with its cause, prakṛti and its enjoyers, all the jīvas, this universe (idam) composed of elements from mahat-tattva to earth element, just as the sun destroys all juices. He did this while merging all his puruṣāvatāra forms endowed with various śaktis (saha śaktibhiḥ).

anantāni tavoktāni yāny aṇḍāni mayā purā
sarvāṇi tāni saṁhṛtya sama-kālaṁ jagat-patiḥ
prakṛtau tiṣṭhati tadā sa rātris tasya kīrtitā

As I have already explained to you, the Lord destroys all the numberless material universes at the same time. Then the universes remain in their unmanifest state within the Supreme Lord. This is known as the Lord's night. Viṣṇu-dharmottara

It is said that the mahā-puruṣa merges into Bhagavān (sva-prakṛtau). Śayanam means that the Lord does not give attention to the activities of the universe, as if he is in a sleeping condition. Param means Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa since it is said ādyo 'vatāraḥ puruṣaḥ parasya: Mahā-viṣṇu is an expansion of the Supreme Lord. (SB 2.6.42) Kṛṣṇa was in his own abode. After this inattention to the universal activities (tad-ante), with the external coverings removed (so they could see him) the deities presiding over the Vedas, with directly authoritative words, or words to indicate Svayam Bhagavān (tal-liṅgaih), woke up the Lord, to make him attentive to creation of the universes.

The meaning is this. Though he has no taste for his "awakening" or paying attention to the powers of māyā in comparison to his superior manifestations inherent in his svarūpa, because of the necessity of paying attention since he has the qualification for the job, he does this in such a way as to give preference to the manifestations from his svarūpa, which tend to cover the manifestation of māyā. This purpose will become clear even in the first prayer.

During the time of pralaya the Lord's abode of Vaikuṇṭha is not destroyed. It is said in the Second Canto:

pravartate yatra rajas tamas tayoḥ
sattvaṁ ca miśraṁ na ca kāla-vikramaḥ
na yatra māyā kim utāpare harer
anuvratā yatra surāsurārcitāḥ

In Vaikuṇṭha there are no rajas or tamas, and no sattva mixed with rajas and tamas. There is no influence of time. There is no influence of māyā at all, what to speak of its products such as material elements. In Vaikuṇṭha the inhabitants are fully dedicated to the Lord and are worshippable by the devas, asuras and devotees. SB 2.9.10

The śrutis of higher and lower qualities had a natural service attitude in reawakening him. That is shown through an example, to strengthen the ancient conclusion. Bards awaken a sleeping king with excellent words indicating his possession of all extraordinary powers without compare. This is explained in my Sandarbha. Thus there is no necessity of repetition. The correct conclusion has already been established, approved by all the Vedas: this means naturally Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa and no one else, since that has been indicated in the verse kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam (SB 1.3.28) This is indicated in the prayers themselves:

nibhṛta-marun-mano-'kṣa-dṛḍha-yoga-yujo hṛdi yan

Simply by constantly thinking of him, the enemies of the Lord attained the same Supreme Truth whom sages fixed in yoga worship by controlling their breath, mind and senses. SB 10.87.23

The śrutis also directly met him. Kṛṣṇaṁ ca tatra cchandobhiḥ stūyamānaṁ su-vismitāḥ: they were especially amazed to see Kṛṣṇa himself there, surrounded by the personified Vedas, who were offering him prayers. SB 10.28.17

Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad says yo 'sau sarveṣu vedeṣu tiṣṭhati: he resides in all the Vedas. Yo 'sau sarva-vedaiḥ gīyate: Kṛṣṇa is praised by all the Vedas. Nārada after hearing the prayers also offered respects and indicated this.

namas tasmai bhagavate kṛṣṇāyāmala-kīrtaye
yo dhatte sarva-bhūtānām abhavāyośatīḥ kalāḥ

I offer my obeisances to him of spotless fame, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who manifests his all-attractive personal expansions so that all living beings

can achieve liberation. SB 10.87.46

Thus all verses show the supreme position of Kṛṣṇa in different ways. This is written at the end of the work. If curious, one may consult that section.

Text 87.14

śrī-śrutaya ūcuḥ
jaya jaya jahy ajām ajita doṣa-gṛbhīta-guṇāṁ
tvam asi yad ātmanā samavaruddha-samasta-bhagaḥ
aga-jagad-okasām akhila-śakty-avabodhaka te
kvacid ajayātmanā ca carato 'nucaren nigamaḥ

The śrutis said: Victory, victory to you, O unconquerable one! By your very nature you are perfectly full in all opulences; therefore please defeat the eternal power of illusion, who assumes control over the modes of nature to create difficulties for conditioned souls. O you who awaken all the material and spiritual energies śaktis of the jīvas, sometimes the Vedas serve you as you sport with your material and spiritual potencies.

COMMENTARY: Having shown in verse 2 that the Lord is directly indicated by praṇava, the leaders of all the great Upaniṣads of twenty-eight varieties, which are expansions of the praṇava, begin to speak in order harmonize the conclusion of all the śrutis, by delineating the essential qualities of the Lord while refuting condemned opinions not approved by the śrutis. First they reveal their first most cherished desire while joking, in a way befitting a bard. O Lord unconquerable by māyā! You must reveal your supreme qualities (jaya jaya)! Repeating the word jaya they indicate, "Why do you not reveal those qualities?" "It will be detrimental to me to cause affrontinjury to māyā who is the cause of variety in this world." You have full powers because of your svarūpa-śakti, full of the highest bliss (ātmanā). Māyā is insignificant. Śrīdhara Svāmī will say "Māyā has no affect on the master of a host of desire cows of continuous bliss and knowledge." Nārada has said:

viśuddha-vijñāna-ghanaṁ sva-saṁsthayā
samāpta-sarvārtham amogha-vāñchitam

Let me surrender to you, Bhagavān. You are the condensed form of pure knowledge and by you who are bliss itself you have forms with many

qualities. SB 10.37.22

“What is the proof that I have such a svarūpa-śakti?” You awaken material and spiritual śaktis of the jīvas (okāṇ) in the material (agat) and spiritual (aga) worlds. You give śakti to all the śaktis.

Since matter is inert, and the operation of its śaktis is similar, to awaken them, you use your svarūpa-śakti, with spiritual form. Awaking the spiritual cit-śakti is also caused by the svarūpa-śakti since it is the shelter of all śaktis. “You understand this by logic but you cannot be the witnesses. There should be direct observers of these śaktis. Those near me do not know the truth about me. They only serve me. To that extent, your words prove nothing.” We Vedas serve you who sometimes perform actions as a puruṣa with māyā (ajayā) for pastimes of creation of the universes, and who sometimes perform actions in the form of Svayam Bhagavān with your svarūpa-śakti, full of bliss (ātmanā) in pastimes of pure bliss. Therefore defeat māyā.

Actually, the Vedas do not speak using the secondary meaning of words (guṇa-vṛttayaḥ). But in order to reject that idea, to confirm the truth, they directly speak about the Lord, mentioning his svarūpa-śakti, by taking support of his various qualities. They describe him by calling him “unconquerable (ajita).” By the special word, in the form of his spiritual name, the śrutis make him turn and face them. The reason they serve him (anucaret) is bhakti alone. This is the conclusion brought out.

The śrutis confirm this. Satyaṁ jñanam anantaṁ brahma: the supreme Lord is unlimited existence and, knowledge and bliss. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad) Vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma: the Lord is knowledge and bliss. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad) Na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇam ca vidyate: the Lord has no senses and no body. (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad) Tam eva bhāntam anubhāti sarvam: all things shine because he shines. (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.5)

yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśānte mahātmanaḥ

The meaning of scripture is revealed to the person who has devotion to the guru as much as he has devotion to the Lord. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23

Text 87.15

bṛhad upalabdham etad avayanty avaśeṣatayā
yata udayāstam-ayau vikṛter mṛdi vāvikṛtāt
ata ṛṣayo dadhus tvayi mano-vacanācaritaṁ
katham ayathā bhavanti bhuvi datta-padāni nṛṇām

Some define you as matter since it remains after the destruction of the universe. It is like the transformation of clay into a pot. Some śrutis testify that the universe appears and disappears while Brahman remains unchanged. Some of the śrutis take you to be the mind, words and actions of this world, but, by indicating you in terms of material objects like pots, such a statment appears to be ignorance to us.

COMMENTARY: While some śrutis offer praise devoid of favoritism to other famous śrutis by pointing out the Lord's spiritual qualities while rejecting material qualities in him, other śrutis, though supporting the famous śrutis, as if embarrassed in the presence of their superiors, praise the Lord by making a verse filled with lakṣaṇā (indirect meaning). They thus define the Lord without proper discrimination.

You are this world, which is the form of the great Brahman. The example is only a representative. Anything beyond you would be a destruction of your greatness. "But the great Brahman and the world are different. The statement would make the world into the highest truth." It remains after pralaya, and thus there is nothing beyond it. An example is given. It is like the transformation of clay into a pot. "We can see the production of a pot from clay but we cannot see the world produced from Brahman." Particular śrutis testify that from the great Brahman (yataḥ) the appearance and disappear of the world takes place. "How can this be? There can be no transformation of the Brahman, like the transformation of clay into a pot. It is because Brahman is without change (avikārāt)." Śrutes tu śabda-mūlatvāt: knowledge of Brahman comes from śruti. As in the example of the cintāmaṇi, by the acintya-śakti this can take place, according to the śrutis.

They then state their intention. Because of this, the Vedas (ṛṣayaḥ), some of our followers, who, like us, praise the world to some extent, define you in terms of (material) minds, words and actions as the great Brahman called the universe, as if being unaware of your pure spiritual form and

qualities. The meaning is that since the effect ultimately lies in the cause, this description of your effects is ultimately a description of you. But their definition lacks to the extreme, since it omits you as the final cause. The meaning is made clear by an illustration. Indicating you in terms of material objects (padāni) like pots, it appears to be ignorance (ayathā) to us. It is not knowledge.

The chief śrutis say sarvaṁ khalv idam brahma: this world is Brahman. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad) Supporting śrutis give examples like indro yato visitasya raja: the Lord is the king of the moving and immobile beings. (Ṛgveda) Among them some give an example: vācārambhaṇaṁ vikāro nāmadheyaṁ mṛttikety eva satyam: earth's transformations are merely verbal creations of the process of naming; the substance earth itself is alone real." (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.1) All of these statements are also considered, not only the statement about clay, though it is considered the chief statement. By speaking, through material senses, pots and other objects become the subject of discussion. These objects are all transformations of earth since they arise from it. This is the truth. It is not like the philosophy of Gautama[3]. It is different. Tad ananyatvam ārambhaṇa-śabdādibhyaḥ: the world is not different from Brahman because of statements of śruti. (Brahma-sūtra 2.1.14)

Text 87.16

iti tava sūrayas try-adhipate 'khila-loka-mala-
kṣapaṇa-kathāmṛtābdhim avagāhya tapāṁsi jahuḥ
kim uta punaḥ sva-dhāma-vidhutāśaya-kāla-guṇāḥ
parama bhajanti ye padam ajasra-sukhānubhavam

O master of the three worlds! Therefore, the wise get rid of all misery by diving deep into the nectarean ocean of your topics, which wash away all the contamination of the universe. Then what to speak of those who, having by spiritual strength rid their minds of bad habits and freed themselves from time, are able to worship your true nature, O supreme one, finding within it uninterrupted bliss?

COMMENTARY: The śrutis who desire only the Lord in his pure pastimes, hearing the conclusion of the śrutis who recited the previous verse, taking this opportunity, praise Kṛṣṇa. O lord of those who reside in the upper,

lower and middle realms! Since all the śrutis are attempting to indicate you, the wise reject the previous verse, and immerse themselves in the experience of unlimited bliss of your topics which erase faults, including impressions of karma. They give up all suffering. Therefore, O most attractive Lord (parama)! What to speak of those who have purified their hearts, time and qualities by your power, those who are ātmārāmas or jīvan-muktas, who worship your lotus feet which give an experience of happiness at every moment. They certainly immerse themselves in your sweet topics and give up all suffering. By that happiness they give up the happiness of the ātmārāma condition. This indicates that those śrutis which propound the pastimes of the Lord have a natural and intense relationship with Bhagavān. Otherwise they would not speak such a verse.

The chief śruti statements in this regard are as follows.
nānudhyāyād bahūṁ śabdān vāco viglāpanaṁ hi tat:

One should not contemplate many words. It is merely a waste of speech. Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad

yasya nāma mahaḍ yasaḥ

His name is the most famous.

viṣṇor nu kaṁ vīryāṇi pravocaṁ yaḥ pārthivāni vimame rajāṁsi

Only he may fully enunciate the heroic deeds of Lord Viṣṇu who can count all the particles of dust in the world. Ṛg Veda 1.154.1

The supporting śrutis are as follows.

yaṁ sarve devā namanit mumukṣavo brahma-vādinaś ca

All devatās, persons desiring liberation and brahma-vādīs offer respects to the Lord. Nṛsiṁha-tāpanī Upaniṣad

The highest principle within all the śrutis is described:

yasyāṁ na me pāvanam aṅga karma
sthity-udbhava-prāṇa-nirodham asya
līlāvatārepsita-janma vā syād
vandhyāṁ giraṁ tāṁ bibhṛyān na dhīraḥ

O Uddhava! The wise do not accept useless scriptures in which there are no descriptions of how I create, maintain and destroy the universe, and in

which there are no descriptions of my auspicious birth as Kṛṣṇa among all the līlāvatāras. SB 11.11.20

Creation refers to his glancing over prakṛti.

Text 87.17

dṛtaya iva śvasanty asu-bhṛto yadi te 'nuvidhā
mahad-aham-ādayo 'ṇḍam asṛjan yad-anugrahataḥ
puruṣa-vidho 'nvayo 'tra caramo 'nna-mayādiṣu yaḥ
sad-asataḥ paraṁ tvam atha yad eṣv avaśeṣam ṛtam

Only if they become your faithful followers are do those who breathe actually alive, otherwise their breathing is like that of a bellows. It is by your mercy alone that the elements, beginning with the mahat-tattva and ahaṅkāra, created the egg of this universe. Among the manifestations known as anna-maya and so forth, you are the ultimate one, entering within the material coverings along with the living entity and assuming the same forms as those he takes. Distinct from the gross and subtle material manifestations, you are the reality underlying them all.

COMMENTARY: In a general way the import of all śrutis has been shown to conclude with pure bhakti. The details of bhakti were then shown. Some śrutis following the śrutis which explained pure bhakti nourished that statement by positive and negative expressions. By that, they glorify the Lord in Janaloka. And now, some other obedient śrutis praise directly Kṛṣṇa by showing him as the ultimate conclusion.

If the jīvas (asubhro) become your devotees (anuvidhāḥ) they live. Otherwise they are like bellows, breathing mechanically. By ignoring you, who gives mercy to mahat-tattva and other elements for the jīvas in the universe, and thus being ignored by all, they are like dead bodies. Not only do you give mercy at the time of creation but during maintenance also. The next phrase is explained in Taittirīya Upaniṣad.

sa vā eṣa puruṣo 'nna-rasa-mayas tasyedam eva śiraḥ ayaṁ dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣa ayam uttaraḥ pakṣaḥ ayam ātmā idaṁ pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā tad apy eṣa śloko bhavati annād vai prajāḥ prajāyante

This body has a human form, made of earth, water and other elements. This is his head. This is his left arm, his right arm, and this is his torso. The

lower body is the basis. There is a verse in this regard. All people are born from the elements.

tasmād vā etasmād anna-rasamayād anyo ’ntara ātmā prāṇamayas tenaiṣa pūrṇaḥ
sa vā eṣa puruṣa-vidhas tasya puruṣa-vidhatām anvayaṁ puruṣa-vidhas tasya prāṇam eva śiraḥ
vyāno dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ apāṇa uttaraḥ pakṣaḥ ākāśa ātmā pṛthivī pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā
tad apy eṣa śloko bhavti prāṇaṁ devā anuprāṇanti

Different from the body made of elements is another body made of prāṇa, filled with prāṇa, with the antaryāmī within. This body has a human form. It takes a human form just as the previous one. Prāṇa is the head. Vyāna is the left arm. Apāṇa is the right arm. Ether is the torso. The deity of the earth is the lower body, the foundation. There is a verse in this regard. The devatās depend on prāṇa.

tasyaiṣa śārīra ātmā yaḥ pūrvasya tasmād vā etasmāt prāṇamayād anyo ’ntara ātmā manomayas tenaiṣa purṇaḥ sa vā eṣa puruṣa-vidha eva
tasya yajur eva śiraḥ ṛgvdakṣiṇaḥ pakṣah sāmaottaraḥ pakṣaḥ ādeśa ātmā atharvāṅgirasaḥ pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā tad apiy eṣa śloko bhavati
yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha ānandaṁ brahmaṇo vidvān na vibheti kadācana

The ātmā of the previous body is the ātmā of this body. Superior to the body made of prāṇa is another body, made mind, filled with mind, with the antaryāmī within. This body has a human form. Yajur mantras are its head. Ṛg mantras are its left arm. Sāma mantras are its right arm. Brāhmaṇas are the torso. Atharvāṅgirasā mantras are the lower body, the foundation. There is a verse in this regard. One who knows the bliss of Brahman from which words turns back with the mind, does not fear at any time.

tasmād vā etasmād manomayād anyo ntara ātmā vijñānamayas tenaisā puṛṇaḥ sa vā eṣa puruṣa-vidha eva
tasya śraddhaiva śiraḥ ṛtaṁ dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ tasyam uttraḥ pakṣaḥ yoga ātmā mahaḥ pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā tad api eṣa śloko bhavti vijñānaṁ yajñaṁ tanute

Superior to the body made of mind is another made of knowledge, full of knowledge, with the antaryāmī within. This also has a human form. Faith is the head, intelligence is the left arm, attempts at finding the real meaning is the right arm, finding the meaning is the torso. The pure jīva is the lower body, the foundation. There is a verse in this regard. Knowledge performs sacrifice.

tasāmd vā etasmād vijñānamayād anyo ntara ātmā ānandamayas tenaisā pūrṇaḥ sa vā eṣāh puruṣa-vidhaḥ eva
tasya priyam eva śiraḥ modo dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ pramoda uttraḥ pakṣaḥ ānanda ātmā brahma puccham̀ pratiṣṭhā tad apy eṣa śloko bhavati asann eva sa bhavati asad brahmeti veda cet …. tasyaisa eva śārīra ātmā yaḥ pūrvasya

Superior to the body of knowledge is another body made of bliss, full of bliss, with the antaryāmī within. That body also has a human form. Its head is pleasure, its left arm is delight, its right arm is ecstasy and its torso is bliss. Brahman is the lower body, the foundation. There is a verse in this regard. He who thinks Brahman does not exist does not exist. He who knows that Brahman exists is known to be existing because of Brahman. The antaryāmī of the previous body is the antaryāmī of this body.

The Śrī-vaiṣṇava explanation is as follows. Vai means famous or certain. The anna-rasa-mayaḥ puruṣaḥ is made of earth, water and other elements. Anna-rasa means the transformation of anna and rasa such as skin. Everything is a transformation of that. Since śleṣma and other bodily constitutents are made of water and other elements the word maya indicates “thoroughly consisting of.” The suffix maya is used in relation to transformation and limbs, and with words like “encompassing.” But in practical terms it means “consisting of.” Transformation does not mean prakṛti (though vikāra has that meaning sometimes). Śiraḥ means head. The various limbs mentioned afterwords form the whole shape. Pakṣa means arm and uttara means left. The middle is the body or torso, called ātmā. Śrūti says that the body is the ātmā among the limbs. The tail (puccham) is the body below the navel (legs, etc.), resembling a tail. That is the shelter, which stands prominently (pratiṣṭhā).

The image is used to reveal something else, like showing the branch to understand the moon. From understanding the well-known body, one can then understand the ātmā mentioned in scripture. From the gross level, the example progresses to the prāṇa. In order to grasp the mind, its container known as prāṇa is first understood. Thus prāṇa is mentioned after the gross body. When the gross body dies, that body full of the elements is taken by the air. That also has a body of a human (puruṣa-vidhaḥ), like the previous body. In order to understand it, it is described metaphorically in terms of head, arms and body. This form is filled with prāṇa, situated in the heart. The head is first described, being the first to be understood. Then the other limbs are described in order. Udāna, vyāna and apāṇa are varieties of prāṇa. Ākāśa in this statement refers to a special function of vāyu. This general vāyu is situated in the middle since it controls the functions of vāyu. It is the controller or ātmā. The earth deity (pṛthivī) is the supporter of bodily prāṇa for it is said saiṣa puruṣasyāpāṇam avaṣṭabhyantara: the deity of the earth attracts the apāṇa. (Praśna Upaniṣad 3.8)

Previously it was said in the same Upaniṣad tasmād vā etasmād ātmāna ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ: from the Lord (ātmanā) came ākāśa. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad) Thus the phrase tasyaiṣa śārīra ātmā refers to the antaryāmī of the body. That which was the antaryāmī of the anna-maya body becomes the antaryāmī of the prāṇa body, etc. It is finally said that it is antaryāmī of the bliss body. By figurative language this means the Lord is ātmā of everything. Vijñānamayād anyo 'antara ātmā: compared to the vijñāna-maya body there is an interior ātmā. After this nothing else is mentioned. That of the previous body (yaḥ pūrvaysa) is the antaryāmī of the next body. The ātmā of the prāṇa-maya body is that of the ānanda-maya body.

By controlling prāṇa one controls the mind. The mind is to be controlled by niṣkāma-karma. This this intention the mind is described. Mind refers to the antaḥkaraṇa which makes decisions. It is superior to prāṇa which is insentient, because of being related to knowledge. Yajus refers to mantras with particular syllables. That is the head, being first. By mantras of the Yajur Veda oblations are offered. Ṛg and Sāma mantras have special applications. Ādeśa refers to the brāhmaṇas since they give specific orders for sacrifice. Atharvāṅgirasā mantras and the brāhmaṇas are called the

shelter or tail because of their prominence in preliminary rituals such as śānti-karma. These are described as limbs of the mind since they manifest in the mental functions. Thus the mind is dominant. By transformation they could become material. Since the topic is spiritual, material rituals are not included in the example. Control of prāṇa was previously rejected (as inferior). Since the human form has a qualification, the human body is praised. That should be understood in the later images also.

Then the vijñana-maya body is described. This is considered superior because it is more refined (karaṇa). Because of this, faith and correct understanding of the scriptures dealing the ātmā are important. Ṛtam means intelligence which determines the meaning of the scriptures. Satyam is the attempt to realize the meaning. Yoga means attaining the truth. That is the torso. Mahaḥ refers to the pure jīva since it is filled with vijñāna. But it is said yo vijñāne tiṣthān vijñānād antaro 'yam yasya vijñāna śārīram: the ātmā is situated in vijñāna and is interior to vijñāna. Its body is vijñāṇa. (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad) This refers to the antaryāmī of the jīva since it is situated in the jīva according to the text. This ātmā is the shelter of the other items.

Having described up to the pure jīva, having attained those opportunities, the final item—the chief item after the previous introduction—the ananda-maya body is described as the topmost. This is the innermost body, since it is the antaryāmī of all beings. It is attained by following the spiritual prescriptions of previous scriptures, not by material methods. This is not the bliss produced by seeing dear sons. It is described by the words priya, moda, and pramoda. These words indicate progressive degrees of excellence of the Lord (Brahman) endowed with the highest bliss. Four names (priya, moda, pramoda, ānanda) are used. Without using the words priya, moda and pramoda there will seem to fluctuation in the pervasion of ānanda. Since these qualities of Brahman are not universally described in worship, one will not finally realize the head as priya, etc. These are not qualities but rather gradual stages of elevation, which started with the anna-maya body. With the words priya, moda and pramoda the intention is to show the supreme position of the ananda-maya Brahman.

According to the previous succession (from gross to subtle), bliss is located within the ātmā. Brahman, being mentioned last of all, is the tail. Brahman

means “the greatest of all.”

In not stating degrees of happiness in the previous images, the intention is to emphasize the word ānanda. It is thus shown to be the ultimate. The words priya, moda and pramoda indicate successively great purity in self-revealed bliss. These take shelter of the tail, Supreme Brahman, which is the foundation. So ’kāmayata bahu syām: he desired, ‘May I become many.” (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.2.4) The word antara (inner) indicates the ananda-maya ātmā (the Lord), unique because he is the shelter of unlimited śaktis, since he is the greatest (brahma). The repetition or confirmation (abhyāsa) of who is the greatest takes place in the following.

so ’kāmayata bahu syāṁ prajāyeyeti
sa tapo tapyata sa tapas taptvā idaṁ sarvam asṛjata
raso vai saḥ

The Lord desired “May I become many.” He made this determination, and then created everything. He is rasa. Taittirīya Upaniṣad

The words ātmā and puccha indicate the depth of the bliss. The supreme Brahman is unbroken and continuous, because he is a substance non-different from his self manifesting śaktis, but at the same time he reveals additional forms through those manifestations of śakti. Brahmavid āpnoti param: one who knows Brahman attains the supreme. (Taittirīya Āraṇyaka) Closeness to Brahman gives a realization that the Lord pervades everything. This was shown in the statement tasmād vā etasmād ātmāna ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ: from the Lord (ātmā) came ākāśa. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad) That ātmā culminates in the ānanda-maya form, since nothing else is stated after that.

Thus this section of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad indicates by repetition the supremacy of the Lord (Brahman). The jīva is not Brahman. Ānandamay ’bhyāsāt: the Lord alone is designated as ānanda-maya by repetition. (Brahma-sūtra 1.1.13) Later it is said netaro ’nupapatteḥ: the jīva is not referred to, because of impossibility. (Brahma-sūtra 1.1.17) These sūtras are explained according to Śrī Rāmānujācārya in the Bhagavat Sandarbha commentary.

The Lord and jīva are defined in the śrutis. And the Lord himself, the personification of Brahman, says yasmāt kṣaram atīto ’ham akṣarād api

cottamaḥ: I am superior to the fallible and the infallible jīvas. (BG 15.18)

In the Gītā Upaniṣad the Lord himself shows that he is the ultimate pratiṣṭhā since he is full of forms, śakti, qualities, and pastimes in his perfect svarūpa.

māṁ ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate
brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca

He who serves me in pure devotional service surpasses the guṇas, and is qualified for Brahman.

I am the basis of impersonal Brahman, the basis of indestructible liberation, the basis of the eternal method of bhakti and the basis of the prema of the unalloyed devotee. BG 14.26-27

This is the meaning. Hi means "the reason is this" according to traditional usage. Another meaning should not be given as it would force a meaning out of context and would be unsuitable by weakening the statement. "How does one attain a condition without qualities (guṇān samatītya) by bhakti? Bhakti appears by experiencing his wonderful qualities." This is because (hi) Brahman is known in the śrutis as the highest position and is called ānanda-maya. But I, Bhagavān, the para-brahman, am the basis of that Brahman. I am the basis of liberation (amṛtasya) which rejects addiction to Svarga (avyayasya).

kālena nāṣṭā vāṇīyām pralaye deva saṁjñitā
mayā dau brahmaṇe proktā dharmo yasyāṁ mad ātmakaḥ

By the influence of time, the Vedic knowledge was lost at the time of annihilation. Therefore, when the subsequent creation took place, I spoke to Brahmā the Vedic knowledge in which bhakti is the essence. SB 11.14.3

I am the basis for the highest sādhana, the root of all human goals, called bhagavad-dharma (śāśvatasya dharmasya).

nātyantikaṁ vigaṇayanty api te prasādaṁ
kimv anyad arpita-bhayaṁ bhruva unnayais te

Persons who have realized you do not regard the attainment of impersonal liberation as your mercy, what to speak of attaining a material position like

Indra which is subject to fear caused by the Lord raising his eyebrow. SB 3.15.48

I am also the basis of the highest result of sādhana, the rasa of prema (ekāntikasya sukhasya). Raso vai saḥ rasṁ hy eva labdhvānandī bhavati: the Lord is rasa and on attaining him, one becomes blissful. (Taittitrīya Upaniṣad) Just as the Upaniṣad placed the ānanda-maya Lord as the highest item, so the Gītā verse also places this aspect of the Lord as the highest. He is most pleasurable since he responds in five ways to the devotees as illustrated in the verse when Kṛṣṇa came into Kaṁsa's arena. (SB 10.43.17)

Since everything is dependent on me, by worshipping me with a desire for merging, one merges into Brahman and attains the qualities of Brahman.

yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukma-varṇaṁ
kartāram iśaṁ puruṣa brahma-yonim
tadā vidvān puṇya-pāpe vidhūya
nirañjanaḥ paramaṁ samyam upaiti

When the seer of brahman sees the Lord, the controller of all, the creator, the cause of the unmanifest prakṛti, with golden color, he becomes free from the reactions to past pious and sinful deeds, and becomes liberated, attaining similarlity to the supreme. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.3

Furthermore, it is said śubhāśrayaḥ sa-cittasya sarva-gasya tathātmanah: the Lord is the auspicious shelter of Brahman, consciousness pervading everywhere. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa) This is the explanation of Śrīdhara Svāmī. This confirms the statement brahmano hi pratiṣṭhāham. Viṣṇu-dharmottara says:

ākāśādiṣu śabdādau śrotrādau mahadādiṣu
prakṛtau puruṣe caiva brahmaṇy api ca sa prabhuḥ
yathaika eva sarvātmā vāsudevo vyapasthitaḥ
tena satyena me pāpaṁ narkārtipradaṁ kṣayam
prayātu sukṛtasyāstu mamānudivasam jayaḥ

Viṣṇu is the master of all elements such as ether, sound, ear and mahat-tattva, prakṛti, the jīva and Brahman. Vāsudeva is situated as the one soul of everything. By this truth, may all my sins which give hellish pain be destroyed. May this truth give me every day the glory of auspiciousness.

The word sarvātmā cannot be interpreted to mean impersonal Brahman. The statement rejects all other meanings.

yathā 'cyutas tvaṁ parataḥ parasmāt
sa brahma bhūtāt parataḥ parātmā
tathācyuta tvaṁ uru vāñchitaṁ tan
mamāpadaṁ cāpaharāprameya

Since as Acyuta, Paramātmā, you are superior to all others, and are superior to Brahman, please grant my desire! O limitless Lord, please remove this danger! Viṣṇu-dharma 26.13

yan-mayaṁ paramaṁ brahma tad-avyaktaṁ ca yan-mayam
yan-mayaṁ vyaktam apy etad bhaviṣyāmi hi tan-mayaḥ

The Supreme Lord is present in the impersonal Brahman. He is present in the unmanifested pradhāna. He is present in the manifested material cosmos. I shall become his devotee. Viṣṇu-dharma 94.58

Śrutis regarding this topic, such as yasya pṛthivī śarīram (he has earth as his body), were already quoted. Now puruṣa-vidha in verse 17 will be explained. The Lord enters (anvayaḥ) into the bodies (made of transformation of mahat-tattva and other elements) of the jīvas individually and as an aggregate to give mercy to them. "What are these bodies?" They are made of food, etc. The final purusa-vidha (human type), like the previous ones, is described as human but filled with bliss. The activities or the prāṇas and senses arise because of your bliss. Thus you are merciful. Ko hy evānyāt kaḥ prāṇyād yad eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt: who could breathe if the sky were not bliss? (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.7.1)

"Let the Brahman be ānanda-maya. I am not like that, since that form is imaginary and I have a direct form." Among the things described as the pratiṣṭha or basis--—that which remains (aśeṣa), which is final--—is the person who has rasa (raso vai saḥ). This is the person who is the shelter of five types of rasa. Gītā says that you are the basis of Brahman and that you are superior to the fallible and infallible jīvas. You are superior to the rasas such as priya or dāsya (sataḥ) and to the other forms such as anna-maya (asataḥ) since you are the shelter of all of them (ṛtam). You are their existence. The word ṛ means "to go." Thus ṛtam means "going to me." The meaning coincides with statements in śruti and the Gītā.

asann eva sa bhavati asad brahmeti veda cet asti brahmeti ced veda santam enaṁ tato viduḥ

If one thinks that Brahman does not exist, he does not exist. If he thinks that Brahman exists, the wise know him as saintly. Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.6.1

sa hānis tan mahac chidraṁ sa mohaḥ sa ca vibhramaḥ
yan-muhūrtaṁ kṣaṇaṁ vāpi vāsudevaṁ na cintayet

If even for a moment remembrance of Vāsudeva is missed, that is the greatest loss, that is the greatest illusion, and that is the greatest anomaly. Viṣṇu Purāṇa

yadā hy evaiṣa etasmin adiśye ’nātmye ’nirukte ’nilayane ’bhaye pratiṣṭhāṁ vindate atah so ’bhayaṅ gato bhavati yadāhy evaiṣa etasmin udaram antraṁ kurute atha tasya bhayaṁ bhavati

When he becomes fixed in the Lord beyond material body and definition, unattached, fearless, he becomes fearless. When he interrupts this meditation even a little, he becomes fearful. Taittirīya Upaniṣad

eko vaśī sarva-bhūtāntarātmā
ekaṁ rūpaṁ bahudhā yaḥ karoti
tam ātma-sthaṁ ye’nupaśyanti dhīrāḥ
teṣāṁ sukhaṁ śāśvataṁ netareṣām

He is the sole controller of the soul within all beings, who makes his one form take many forms. Those devotees who see him within have eternal happiness. Others do not. Kaṭha Upaniṣad

nityo’nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānāṁ
eko bahūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān
tam ātmasthaṁ ye’nupaśyanti dhīrāḥ
teṣāṁ śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣām

Among all the eternal, conscious beings, there is one who supplies the needs of everyone else. The wise souls who worship him in his abode attain everlasting peace. Others cannot. Kaṭha Upaniṣad

Text 87.18

udaram upāsate ya ṛṣi-vartmasu kūrpa-dṛśaḥ
parisara-paddhatiṁ hṛdayam āruṇayo daharam

tata udagād ananta tava dhāma śiraḥ paramaṁ
punar iha yat sametya na patanti kṛtānta-mukhe

Among the followers of the methods set forth by great sages, those with less refined vision worship the antaryāmī in the region of the abdomen. The Āruṇis then worship him in the heart, which allows one to come close to the Lord. From there, O unlimited Lord, these worshipers raise their consciousness upward to the suṣumnā, Satya-loka and then to Vaikuṇṭha. They reach that place from which they will never again fall to this world into the mouth of death.

COMMENTARY: Among all the agreeing śrutis, some others which were not clearly recognized as important by them show their allegiance to them. First, in the previous verse, five types of souls were described in gradual progression. Taking the opportunity when the previous śrutis stopped speaking, śrutis teaching krama-mukti (gradual elevation) through yoga began to praise the Lord. Udaram refers to the antaryāmī of Vaiśvānara, who gives kriyā-śakti for stimulation of anna and rasa.

ahaṁ vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇināṁ deham āśritaḥ
prāṇāpāna-samāyuktaḥ pacāmy annaṁ catur-vidham

I am the fire of digestion in the bodies of all living entities, and I join with the air of life, outgoing and incoming, to digest the four kinds of foodstuff. BG 15.14

Hṛdayam refers to antaryāmī of the jīva, who gives jñana-śakti for stimulating intelligence.

mahān prabhur vai puruṣaḥ sattvasyaiṣa pravartakaḥ
su-nirmalāṁ imāṁ prāptim īśāno jyotir avyayaḥ
aṅguṣṭha-mātraḥ puruṣo ’ntar-ātmā sadā janānāṁ hṛdaye sanniviṣṭaḥ
hṛdā manīṣā manasābhikḷpto ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhavanti

The Supreme Lord becomes the puruṣa to initiate the expansion of this cosmos. He is the perfect, pure goal that yogīs strive to reach, the effulgent and infallible ultimate controller. Measuring the size of a thumb, the puruṣa is always present as the Supersoul within the hearts of all living beings. By exercising proper intelligence, one can realize him within the heart; those who learn this method will gain immortality. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

The order of the cakras is explained in the Second Canto. The explanation is in terms of the individual, but represents the universal form. Thus udaram refers to the sky (below Svarga) and navel region of the universal form. Nabhastalaṁ nābhi-saro gṛṇanti: outer space is the depression of his navel. (SB 2.1.27) The heart represents Svarga in the universal form. Uraḥ-sthalaṁ jyotir-anīkam asya: the chest of the the gigantic form is Svarga. (SB 2.1.28) The heart is the place where one can come close to the Lord (parisara-paddhatim), but difficult to access (daharam).

From the worship of those two places (tataḥ) he goes to your place (dhāma) called the suṣumnā. Suṣumṇayā brahma-pathena śociṣā: the yogī goes by the suṣumnā path leading to Brahma-loka. (SB 2.2.24) The suṣumnā is luminous because of the presiding deity. He then goes to the head (śiraḥ). Satyaṁ tu śīrṣāṇi sahasra-śīrṣṇaḥ: the topmost planetary system, known as Satya-loka, is the head of he who has one thousand heads. (SB 2.1.28) From there it is understood he goes to the supreme Vaikuṇṭha (paramam). The worshippers do not return.

Text 87.19

sva-kṛta-vicitra-yoniṣu viśann iva hetutayā
taratamataś cakāssy anala-vat sva-kṛtānukṛtiḥ
atha vitathāsv amūṣv avitathāṁ tava dhāma samaṁ
viraja-dhiyo ’nuyanty abhivipaṇyava eka-rasam

Apparently entering among the variegated species of living beings you have created, you reveal your śakti in them in various degrees, just as fire manifests differently according to the shape of what it burns. Therefore those of spotless intelligence, who are altogether free from material attachments, realize your attractive svarūpa to be the permanent among all these impermanent life forms.

COMMENTARY: You enter into various bodies like Brahmā and trees which are created by you since they are transformations of yourself through your acintya-śakti, through the instigator (hetutayā), antaryāmī. Tat sṛṣṭvā tad evānuprāviśat: having created he entered. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.6.2)

The Lord seems (iva) to enter since it is impossible that he would enter using his primary form. You reveal your śakti in these bodies to various

degrees. The reason is that you manifest śakti in a particular body according to the amount of action you manifest release (sva-krtānukṛtiḥ). According to the numberamount of sparks, the fire shows its śakti. Of course, you have unlimited śakti even in those bodies. Vikārāvarti ca tathā hi sthitim: the Lord is without change. (Brahma-sūtra 4.4.19) The śrutis also show this.

Text 87.20

sva-kṛta-pureṣv amīṣv abahir-antara-saṁvaraṇaṁ
tava puruṣaṁ vadanty akhila-śakti-dhṛto ’ṁśa-kṛtam
iti nṛ-gatiṁ vivicya kavayo nigamāvapanaṁ
bhavata upāsate ’ṅghrim abhavam bhuvi viśvasitāḥ

The individual living entity, while inhabiting the material bodies he has created for himself by his karma, actually remains uncovered by either gross or subtle matter. This is so because, as the Vedas describe, he is part of you, the possessor of all potencies. Having determined this to be the status of the living entity, learned sages become imbued with faith and worship your lotus feet, to which all the Vedas testify and which are beyond birth.

COMMENTARY: After hearing the words of śrutis dedicated to the Lord with their descriptions of the purity of the Lord, in his portion as antaryāmī, some humble śrutis describe the conclusion of other śrutis who explained the jīva’s attaining the Lord’s mercy.

The Vedas speak of the jīva (puruṣam), who is both different and non-different from you, in his various bodies created by you (as described in the previous verse). They are actually perfect as your aṁśas. The jīva must be described in this way and not otherwise. Gopāla-tāpanī says

brāhmaṇo ’ṁśa-bhūtas tathetaro bhoktā bhavati: one is a portion of Brahman and enjoys the fruit and the other is the witness.

“Why is it that the jīva can be aṁśa of the Lord but the Lord is said to be indivisible?” This is an eternal condition. Mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ: the living entities in this conditioned world are my eternal fragmental parts. (BG 15.7) Dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyaḥ: two companion

birds sit together in the shelter of the same pippala tree. (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.6)

The jīvas belong to the Lord who possess all powers (akhila-śakti-dhṛtaḥ).

viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā kṣetra-jñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā-karma-saṁjñānyā tṛtīyā śaktir

The Lord has a superior energy, another energy called the jīva and a third energy, the material energy, called avidyā-karma. Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.7.61

bhūmir āpo ʼnalo vāyuḥ khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā
apareyam itas tv anyāṁ prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat

Earth, water, fire, air, ether (as well as their sense objects), pradhāna, mahat-tattva, and false egoahaṅkāra (with the ten senses) are my separated energy in eight divisions. This is my inferior energy. But understand my superior energy which is different from this inferior energy. It is the jīvas, who employ the inferior energy for their enjoyment. BG 7.4-5

etad-yonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇīty upadhāraya
ahaṁ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā

Know that all things of the universe have their origin in these two energies, and that I am the origin and dissolution of the whole universe.

mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya
mayi sarvam idaṁ protaṁ sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva

There is nothing superior to me, O conqueror of wealth. Everything is in me as pearls are strung on a thread. BG 7.6-7

According to the Gītā which indicates ultimately the svarūpa-śakti by indicating that he alone enables the superior and inferior prakṛtis to function, there are three śaktis. You possess these three śaktis (akhila-śakti-dhṛtaḥ), which have inconceivable influence as effects of the Lord.

These śaktis of the Lord remain eternally, performing difficult tasks without any fault. Thus the jīvas, as products of your śakti, exist eternally.

“Then the jīvas should also have powers like Matsyadeva. Without those powers, they are just like inert matter.” The jīva is permeated with your

antaraṅga-svarūpa (antara), devoid of māyā (abahir). Viṣṇu Purāṇa explains that the jīvas are like particles of light intermediate between the sun globe and the shadow. The sun represents Bhagavān and the jīva is his aṁśa, since it is the Lord's particular manifestation revealing a small amount of his śakti. The jīvas are separated aṁśas since they are like rays of Matsya and other avatāras. Mahā-varāha Purāṇa says:

svāṁśaś cātha vibhinnāṁśa iti dvedhāṁśa iṣyate
aṁśino yat tu sāmarthyaṁ yat svarūpaṁ yathā sthitiḥ
tad eva nāṇumātro'pi bhedaḥ svāṁśāṁśinoḥ kvacit
vibhinnāṁśo'lpa-śaktiḥ syāt kiñcit sāmarthya-mātra-yuk

There are two types of aṁśas: vibhinnāṁśa and svāṁśa. The svāṁśa expansions are unlimitedly powerful. Their form and personality are the same as Svayam Bhagavān. There is not the slightest difference between the svāṁśa expansions and Svayam Bhagavān. The vibhinnāṁśa expansions are very weak in comparison to them, having only a little power.

The phrase may also be explained as follows. The jīva is not permeated with the kriyā-śakti nor antar-jñāna-śakti, which are beyond māyā. As the sun is not covered by shadow, the avatāras like Matsya are not covered by māyā. The jīva, vibhinnāṁśa, like a ray of the sun, is covered. kṣetrajñāśaktiḥ sa tāratamyena vartate: the jīva or kṣetra-jña is surrounded by this prakṛti in various degrees. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa) Avidyā-karma-saṁjñānyā tṛtīyā śaktiḥ: the third energy, the material energy, called avidyā-karma. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa) That is because it produces actions of ignorance.

yat taṭasthaṁ tu cid-rūpa sva-saṁvedyād vinirgatam
rañjitaṁ guṇa-rāgeṇa sa jīva iti kathyate

The jīva is defined as marginal, conscious, tinged with the guṇas, arising between the Lord's spiritual and material energies. Viṣṇu Purāṇa

The jīva is covered with the upādhi of māyā (aṁśa-kṛtam). This is further explained. According to the method explained, the wise, having faith in the nature of your aṁśa, the jīva (nṛ-gatim), worship your feet since you are the aṁśī and the jīvas are insignificant.

"There are other aṁśīs. They should also be worshipped." Those feet are completely described in all the Vedas. The Vedas proclaim you as most

worthy of worship, the ultimate meaning of the Vedas, and the highest goal. “Why are other forms not in a similar poisiton since they have limbs like you?” Since you are described in this way in the Vedas, you never take birth (abhavam). Or, your feet cause others not to take birth. Thus the feet of course are without birth. This is the best sādhana on earth (bhuvi). The chief śrutis also speak in the same way:

māyāṁ tu prakṛtiṁ vidyān māyinam tu maheśvaram
asyāvayava-bhūtaiś ca vyāptaṁ sarvam idaṁ jagat

Know the material energy and its lord, the cause of māyā. The whole universe is spread with the products arising from his limbs. Śvetāśvarata Upaniṣad

yo yoniṁ yonim adhitiṣṭhaty eko
yasminn idam saṁ ca vicaiti sarvam
tam īśānaṁ varadaṁ devam īḍyaṁ
nicāyyemāṁ śāntim atyantam eti

One who knows the generous and glorious Supreme Lord, who alone created the material world and in whom it enters at the end, attains perfect peace. Śvetāśvarata Upaniṣad

Supporting evidence also is there:

sarve vedā yat padam āmanti

All the Vedas describe the Supreme Lord’s feet. Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.15

caraṇaṁ pavitraṁ vitataṁ purāṇaṁ yena pūtas tarati duṣkṛtāni

We become pufified and can cross saṁsāra by that pure, ancient foot which extended itself. Mahā-nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad

Text 87.21

duravagamātma-tattva-nigamāya tavātta-tanoś
carita-mahāmṛtābdhi-parivarta-pariśramaṇāḥ
na parilaṣanti kecid apavargam apīśvara te
caraṇa-saroja-haṁsa-kula-saṅga-visṛṣṭa-gṛhāḥ

My Lord, some fortunate souls have gotten relief from the fatigue of material life by diving into the vast nectar ocean of your pastimes, which you enact when you manifest your personal forms to propagate your

form, qualities and pastimes. These rare souls, indifferent even to liberation, renounce the happiness of home and family because of their association with devotees who are like flocks of swans enjoying the lotus of your feet.

COMMENTARY: Hearing this and having their own bhāva stimulated, Upaniṣads situated at his feet directly describe his sweetness. O Lord, whose powers are the highest! Some rare souls do not at all desire liberation what to speak of other things. You have appeared in this world with your spiritual form in order that people experience your form, qualities and pastimes as they are, which are difficult to understand since they exist in Goloka or Vaikuṇṭha beyond everyone's vision and mind.

These rare souls immerse themselves in your topics which are like a great ocean of nectar, including the bliss of impersonal liberation and sālokya, etc., while at the same time they obtain relief from the fatigue of saṁsāra. "Many people hear these topics, but they do not experience relief. What is the reason?" The secret is placed at the end of the verse. Swans related to lotuses in this world are compared to persons who have realized the highest truth (haṁsa) related to the Lord's feet. These people have given up their houses by even one contact with a group of disciples of disciples (kula) of persons who are like swans relishing the sweetness of the Lord's lotus feet, which derides the bliss of liberation. What to speak of having constant contact with such devotees. What to speak of meeting the disciples and what to speak of meeting the swan-like persons in person.

The chief śrutis related to this point are as follows:

oṁ caraṇaṁ pavitraṁ vitataṁ purāṇaṁ
yena pūtas tarati duṣkṛtāni
tena pavitreṇa śuddhena pūtā
api pāpmānam arātiṁ tarema

The sacred water that has washed the Lord's feet and that is famous from ancient times washes away all sins. Purified by that sacred water, we will escape the hostile world of birth and death, the home of sins. Mahā-nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad

lokasya dvāram ārcayat pavitraṁ jyotiṣmat vibhrājamānaṁ mahas tad
amṛtasya dhārā bahudhā dohamānaṁ caraṇaṁ loke sudhitāṁ dadhātu

The splendid and sacred stream of nectar that has washed the Lord's feet is the door to the spiritual world. Running in many swelling streams, may it flood the world with nectar. Mahā-nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad

The phrase amṛtasya dhārā bahudhā dohamānam is similar to carita-mahāmṛtābdhi. The verse gives an understanding of the Lord by describing with devotion his feet, which represent his beautiful form. Other śrutis following in their footsteps say yaṁ sarve devā namanti mumukṣavo brahma-vādinaś ca: those who enjoy, those desiring liberation, and brahma-vādis offer him respects. (Nṛsiṁha-tāpanī Upaniṣad) The order of persons is with increasing excellence. Devatās enjoy, those desiring liberation give up enjoyment, and the brahma-vādis teach those desiring liberation. They are liberated. Brahma-vādi means one who speaks of or reveals Brahman. Madhvācārya quotes the following śruti. Muktā api hy enam upāsate muktānām api bhaktir hi paramānanda-rūpinī: those who are libereated worship the Lord; bhakti gives the highest bliss to even liberated persons. (Sauparṇa śruti) Muktopasṛpya vyapdeśāt: liberated souls attain the Lord. (Brahma-sūtra 1.3.2)

Text 87.22

tvad-anupathaṁ kulāyam idam ātma-suhṛt-priya-vac
carati tathonmukhe tvayi hite priya ātmani ca
na bata ramanty aho asad-upāsanayātma-hano
yad-anuśayā bhramanty uru-bhaye ku-śarīra-bhṛtaḥ

This human body, related to the ātmā, is actually temporary. It acts as one's self, friend and beloved. But unfortunately, although you always show mercy to the conditioned souls and affectionately help them in every way, and although you are their true self, people in general fail to have attraction for you. Instead they commit spiritual suicide by serving temporary objects related to their bodies. Alas, because they persistently hope for success in their attraction to the unreal, they continue to wander about this greatly fearful world, assuming various degraded bodies.

COMMENTARY: Hearing from the śrutis the excellence of pure rati for the Lord, some other śrutis, their followers, praise the Lord by stating the opposite condition to strengthen the statement. The temporary body

which is dependent on ātmā (anupatham) is something like the ātmāsoul (kulāyam) by being related to you, Paramātmā. This means that it seems to be the object of rati with that form. But when the body dies, it is no longer attractive. It is like the self because by ahaṅkāra one thinks of the body as the self. The body is a friend because it offers the enjoyment of objects. It is dear because it is the object of affection. Because of the presence of ātmā, there is a combination of ātmā and body. The body becomes the object of pleasure because of appearing like the ātmā---—by having a relationship with ātmā. Because you are present as Paramātmā within the body, you have forms which are facing the jīvas (unmukhe), and because you are self-revealing, you by your nature give benefit (hite) to those who recognize you, and you inspire that jīva to seek out those forms. You are not insentient like the body. It is astonishing that people do not have an attraction for you as much as for their bodies. How unfortunate! It is not so astonishing. The cause presents itself spontaneously. By serving objects related to the body (asat), they kill themselves. Thus it is reasonable that they are not attracted to you. In hopes for things related to the body, they wander about in great fear, taking degraded bodies. Śruti supports this conclusion. Other statements also support this, such as asūryā nāma te lokāḥ: the killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets of darkness. (Īśopaniṣad)

Text 87.23

nibhṛta-marun-mano-’kṣa-dṛḍha-yoga-yujo hṛdi yan
munaya upāsate tad arayo ’pi yayuḥ smaraṇāt
striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyo
vayam api te samāḥ sama-dṛśo ’ṅghri-saroja-sudhāḥ

Simply by constantly thinking of him, the enemies of the Lord attained the same Supreme Truth whom sages fixed in yoga worship by controlling their breath, mind and senses. Similarly, we śrutis, who generally see you as all-pervading, will achieve the same nectar from your lotus feet that your consorts are able to relish because of their loving attraction to your mighty, serpentine arms, for you look upon us and your consorts in the same way.

COMMENTARY: Upaniṣads like Gopāla-tāpanī, standing there with a desire to praise the Lord at the end, with deep devotion to Kṛṣṇa alone, hearing the other śrutis' various conclusions and not being able to surpress their enthusiasm, directly describe the greatness of Kṛṣṇa's intimate devotees along with the description of the excellence of his appearance in this world. Taking support from what was just said, they produce this verse.

Why should his ordinary qualities be described? Please hear about his extraordinary nature. Four groups of people (sages, enemies, gopīs, and śrutis) are described in this verse. The word api separates the sages and enemies mentioned in the first two lines from those mentioned in the last two lines, and the enemies are lesser in status than the sages and the śrutis are lesser than the gopīs. The second two attained the Lord to a greater degree than the first two. That is the meaning.

Sages on their own, with great effort (nibhṛta), in the pure antaḥ-karaṇa, worship or realize or attain you, after a long time, in the form of Brahman without qualities. The enemies of the Lord, being of opposite nature to the sages, are eternally qualified for the worst hell. But they, just by remembering the Lord with great offense, achieve the Lord before the sages do. This means they merge with the Lord. Ah! Let that be! This is the special quality which distinguishes Kṛṣṇa from the appearances of all avatāras: he gives liberation to those who hate him[4].

Hear about the qualities of the gopīs who are greater than us. Your eternal consorts (striyaḥ), such as Rādhā, take (upāsate) your lotus feet which are sweet to the touch (’ṅghri-saroja-sudhāḥ) on their chests (hṛdi). Yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu: your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts. (SB 10.31.19) The plural (sudhāḥ) indicates that they continually do this. Śukadeva also describes this through the words of the women of Mathurā. Aho gopyas tapaḥ kim acaran: what severe austerities the gopīs must have performed to be able to regularly see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, who are the greatest source of pleasure for all mankind! (SB 10.41.31) Those feet are incomparable and ever fresh. We śrutis also desire that sweetness of his feet as expressed by Uddhava, though we are unqualified.

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāṁ
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
yā dustyajaṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-padavīṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām

The gopīs of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, which one should search for by Vedic knowledge. Oh, let me be fortunate enough to be one of the bushes, creepers or herbs in Vṛndāvana, because the gopīs trample them and bless them with the dust of their lotus feet. (SB 10.47.61)

We wish to attain bodies of gopīs in Vraja, women with forms similar to theirs. Their minds were attached to your strong arms. What austerity did they do to become like this?

nāyaṁ śriyo ’ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ
svar-yoṣitāṁ nalina-gandha-rucāṁ kuto ’nyāḥ
rāsotsave ’sya bhuja-daṇḍa-gṛhīta-kaṇṭha-
labdhāśiṣāṁ ya udagād vraja-sundarīṇām

When Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the gopīs in the rāsa-līlā, the gopīs were embraced by the arms of the Lord. This favor was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune, though she was intensely attracted to him, or to other consorts in the spiritual worldwhose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. And what to speak of worldly women? SB 10.47.60

This means the gopīs were endowed with the rarest mahābhāva brought about by realizations of Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness. The feet of the manvantara-avatāra, son of Vikuṇṭha[5], were also desired by the great sages:

evaṁ tadaiva bhagavān aravinda-nābhaḥ
svānāṁ vibudhya sad-atikramam ārya-hṛdyaḥ
tasmin yayau paramahaṁsa-mahā-munīnām
anveṣaṇīya-caraṇau calayan saha-śrīḥ

At that moment, the Lord, with lotus navel, who appears within the hearts of the deserving, understanding that his servants had offended the

Kumāras, came to the seventh gate with Lakṣmī, moving his feet which should be sought by the great renounced sages. SB 3.15.37

How will the śrutis attain this position? They should have bhāvas following after those of the gopīs (samadṛśaḥ). May similar service as the gopīs, with the highest bhāvas for the object of our desires become visible (dṛśaḥ). The word "arm" indicates their strong rāga for Kṛṣṇa's embrace. The word "foot" indicates their devotion to him, expressing their humble position. These words indicate para-brahman in human form. Bṛhad-vāmana Purāṇa says:

brahmānanda-mayo loko vyāpī vaikuṇṭha-saṁjñitaḥ
tal-loka-vāsī tatra-sthaiḥ stuto vedaiḥ parātparaḥ
ciraṁ stutyā tatas tuṣṭaḥ parokṣaṁ prāha tān girā
tuṣṭo 'smi brūta bhoḥ prājñā varaṁ yan manasecchatha

All the spiritual planets are spread with the bliss of the Lord. The inhabitants are praised by the Vedas residing there. After praising a long time, the Lord was satisfied and spoke to the Vedas while remaining invisible. "I am pleased with you. O Vedas! Please ask the boon which you desire."

śrutaya ūcuḥ
yathā tal-loka-vāsinyaḥ kāma-tattvena gopikāḥ
bhajanti ramaṇaṁ matvā cikīrṣājani nas tathā

The śrutis replied, 'We have developed the desire to become like the cowherd women of the mortal world who, inspired by lust, worship you in the mood of a lover.'

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
āgāmini viriñcau tu jāte sṛṣṭy-artham udite
kalpaṁ sāraśvataṁ prāpya vraje gopyo bhaviṣyatha

'When the next Brahmā takes birth to faithfully execute his duties of creation, and when the day of his life called the Sārasvata-kalpa arrives, you will all appear in Vraja as gopīs.'

Among them, the chief, Gāyatrī, attained him as a gopī. This is stated in Padma Purāṇa. One can consult the commentaries on the rāsa-līlā. The chief śrutis also state this.

apūtaḥ pūto bhavati yaṁ māṁ smṛtvā, avratī vratī bhavati yaṁ māṁ smṛtvā, niṣkāmaḥ sa-kāmo bhavati yaṁ māṁ smṛtvā, aśrotrī śrotrī bhavati yaṁ māṁ smṛtvā

By remembering me, one who is impure becomes pure. By remembering me, one who follows no vows becomes a strict follower of vows. By remembering me, one who is desireless develops desires to serve me. By remembering me, one who has studied no Vedic mantras becomes an expert knower of the Vedas. Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad (Uttara 4)

Text 87.24

ka iha nu veda batāvara-janma-layo 'gra-saraṁ
yata udagād ṛṣir yam anu deva-gaṇā ubhaye
tarhi na san na cāsad ubhayaṁ na ca kāla-javaḥ
kim api na tatra śāstram avakṛṣya śayīta yadā

Everyone in this world has recently been born and will soon die. So how can anyone here know this topic, since Mahāviṣṇu existed prior to everything else and gave rise to sense devatās and rulers of planets like Brahmā? When he lies down and withdraws everything within himself, nothing else remains—no gross or subtle matter or bodies composed of these, no force of time or scriptures.

COMMENTARY: Some śrutis, delighted by what was said, excuse their fault in being ignorant of the matter. Who in the universe knows this (understood from previous verse)? The śrutis who made the statement know. Nu indicates conjecture. Frowning they say, "No one else knows." It is beyond everyone's birth and knowledge (agrasaram) because Mahā-viṣṇu (ṛṣih), who manifests the Vedas through his breathing, appeared. Ādyo 'vatāraḥ puruṣaḥ parasya: Kāraṇārṇavaśāyī Viṣṇu is the first incarnation of the Supreme Lord. (SB 2.6.42) But ultimately Kṛṣṇa is indicated. Yasyāṁśāṁśāṁśa-bhāgena viśvotpatti-layodayāḥ: O Soul of all that be, the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe are all carried out by a fraction of an expansion of an expansion of your expansion. (SB 10.85.31) After him, the two types of devatās—deities of the senses (directions, sun, wind, etc.) and deities of the planets (Brahmā, etc) appeared. Eko nārāyaṇa āsīn na brahmā neśāna, tasmād evaite vyajāyante: first there was only Nārāyaṇa, not Brahmā or Śiva and from him they all

arose. Thee living entities are born and die. So who can know him? No one knows him.

The scriptures exist during maintenance, but because of the absence of the ability to hear and also no scriptures at destruction, there is ignorance about you. At the time of universal destruction, the Lord takes the scriptures which praise him to his spiritual abode and pays no attention to the activities of the universe. The jīvas are thus without knowledge of you. At that time there is no gross or subtle matter. There is no sense of time, since there is no creation. The śrutis also say the same thing. Śrīdhara Svāmī quotes the following:

ko ’ddhā veda ka iha pravocat
kuta āyātāḥ kuta iyaṁ visṛṣṭiḥ
arvāg devā visarjanenā-
thā ko veda yata ā babhūva

Who in this world actually knows, and who can explain, whence this creation has come? The demigods, after all, are younger than the creation. Who, then, can tell whence this world has come into being? Ṛg Veda 3.54.5

Text 87.25

janim asataḥ sato mṛtim utātmani ye ca bhidāṁ
vipaṇam ṛtaṁ smaranty upadiśanti ta ārupitaiḥ
tri-guṇa-mayaḥ pumān iti bhidā yad abodha-kṛtā
tvayi na tataḥ paratra sa bhaved avabodha-rase

Supposed authorities who declare that matter is the origin of existence, that the permanent qualities of the soul can be destroyed, that the self is completely aloof from the body or that attaining results of work is the only reality—all such authorities base their teachings on mistaken ideas that hide the truth. Some say the Lord is a jīva covered by the three guṇas. All these philosophies are created out of ignorance since you are above matter.

COMMENTARY: Approving of this statement, some śrutis discuss this with further proofs, and show that even some who are respected as gurus do not know this. Because they do not think of the Paramātmā, the followers of Sāṅkhya think the jīvas are completely aloof from the body. Some think

incorrectly as a disturbance (bhidā) that you Paramātmā (tvayi) are the jīva (pumān) endowed with the three guṇas. This arises from ignorance (abodha-kṛtā). It is not possible in you (tvayi).

This is because you have a spiritual form (paratra) that cannot be considered the object of ignorance and the cause of ignorance. And this is because you are pure knowledge (avabodha-rase). The jīva has knowledge but you have supreme knowledge. Some make you into the object and cause of ignorance, like contamination of light—which becomes darkness. Because of ignorance of the greatness of your acintya-śakti, some people imagine in this manner.

To refute the idea that everything comes from matter, it is said sad eva saumyedam agra āsīt: the Lord existed before this world. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad) To refute the idea that the ātmā is destructible, it is said yat prayanty abhisaṁviśanti: after annihilation everything is conserved in Brahman. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 3.1.1)

yathodakam suddhe suddham asiktam tadrgeva bhavanti
evam muner-vijanata atma bhavati gautama

As pure water poured into pure water becomes the very same, so the self of the seer

who is endowed with knowledge becomes like the Supreme Self. Kaṭha Upanisad 2.1.15

samāṇe vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno nīśayā śocati muhymānaḥ

The jīva is in the same tree, bewildered and lamenting, unaware of the Lord. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.7

The Lord being the jīva is refuted with the following. Eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ: he is the one Lord situated in all beings. (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.11) Sarva-bhūta-antarātmā: the Lord resides within all beings (Kaṭha Upaniṣad) Ekadhā bahudhā caiva dṛśyate jala-candravat: he is perceived as one and as many like the moon in the water. (Amṛta-bindu Upaniṣad)

One form appears like many reflections, but does not really become reflections. Ambuvat agrahaṇāt tu na tathātvam: the jīva is not a reflection of the Lord since he is not perceived as such. (Brahma-sūtra 3.2.19) Vṛddhi-

hrāsa-bhāktvaṁ antarbhāvād ubhaya-sāmañjasyād eva: in a secondary sense the comparion of the Lord and jīva to the sun and its reflection is acceptable in terms of greatness and smallness. (Brahma-sūtra 3.2.20)

That the material world is the only reality is also refuted.

tad yatheha karma jito lokaḥ kṣīyate evam evāmutra puṇya jito lokaḥ kṣīyata

Just as whatever benefit one works hard to attain in this world is eventually depleted, so whatever life one earns for oneself in the next world by his piety will also eventually end. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.1.16

The Lord is beyond the three guṇas. Āditya-varṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt: the Supreme Lord is beyond the material world and beyond all darkness. (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad)

Acintya-śakti is illustrated in the following. Parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śruyate: the Lord has a variety of śaktis. (Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad) Māyāṁ tu prakṛtiṁ vidyān māyinaṁ tu maheśvaram: know the material energy and its Lord, the cause of māyā. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.2

naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā
proktānyenaiva su-jñānāya preṣṭha

This realization, dear boy, cannot be acquired by logic. It must be spoken by an exceptionally qualified spiritual master to a knowledgeable disciple. Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.9

avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ
svayaṁ dhīrāḥ paṇḍitaṁ manyamānāḥ.
jaṅghanyamānāḥ pariyanti mūḍhā
andhenaiva nīyamānā yathāndhāḥ

Caught in the grip of ignorance, self-proclaimed experts consider themselves learned authorities. They wander about this world befooled, like the blind leading the blind. Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.5

Text 87.26

sad iva manas tri-vṛt tvayi vibhāty asad ā-manujāt
sad abhimṛśanty aśeṣam idam ātmatayātma-vidaḥ

na hi vikṛtiṁ tyajanti kanakasya tad-ātmatayā
sva-kṛtam anupraviṣṭam idam ātmatayāvasitam

The mind composed of the three guṇas, carrying out action within you, appears to be the giver of true knowledge. But those who know you see you as the root of everything. Just as things made of gold are not to be rejected, since their substance is actual gold, so this world is to be accepted as real, being a manifestation from the Lord, who created it and then entered within it.

COMMENTARY: Asato ’dhimano ’sṛjyata: the original mind was created from asat. The word asat here means “beyond the effects of what is real in this world: the cause of everything.” Brahma-sūtra (2.1.17) corroborates this interpretation with asad-vyapadeśān neti cen na dharmāntareṇa vākya-śeṣāt: if one objects that the material world and its source cannot be of one substance because the world has been called unreal, we reply, ‘No, because the statement that Brahman is asat makes sense in terms of his having qualities distinct from those of the creation.’ Thus, the Lord (asat) manifested the controller of everything (adhimanaḥ), his own mind. He did this for his own purpose.

atha punar eva nārāyaṇaḥ so ’nyaṁ kāmaṁ manasā dhyāyet. tasya dhyānāntaḥ-sthasya lalanāt svedo ’patat. tā imā pratatāpa tāsu tejo hiraṇ-mayam aṇḍaṁ tatra brahmā catur-mukho ’jāyata.

Then Nārāyaṇa meditated upon another desire and as he pondered, a drop of perspiration fell from his forehead. All the material creations evolved from the fermentation of this drop. Therein the fiery, golden egg of the universe appeared, and within that globe four-headed Brahmā took his birth. Mahā-nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad 1.4

A doubt is raised by a person in ignorance, which should be resolved. “The śrutis have taught first about voidness. Then they have taught about knowledge of the mind. Finally they speak of asat as the final cause. Because of the predominance of mind in these descriptions, it is the cause of knowledge in all circumstances by its logical ability. Because mind produces the śrutis, how can it be revealed by the śrutis?”

The answer is given. Since the mind arising from the three guṇas acts within you (asat), it appears to produce real knowledge. But actually it

does not produce true knowledge. Brahma-sūtra (2.1.11) declares, tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt: logical reasoning is inconclusive. Those who know you as the root svarūpa of everything (ātma-vidaḥ) see you alone (aśeṣam idam) with a real form pervading the jīva, as the root form of everything (ātmatayā).

Padma Purāṇa says:

cetanā tu dvidhā proktā jīva ātmā ca sā prabho
jīvā brahmādayaḥ proktā ātmaikas tu janārdanaḥ
itareṣv ātma-śabdas tu sopacāro 'bhidhīyate

There are two conscious beings: the jīva and the lord. Jīvas are Brahmā and others, and the Lord is one, Janārdana. The word ātmā is used in a secondary sense for other things.

The śrutis present this by an example. The merchant does not reject objects made from gold because those things follow after gold. They accept gold and gold objects as the same. Everything in the world following after the Lord (sva-krṭam) is confirmed as manifestations of his svarūpa. Thus void is not the cause nor is mind the main factor. Everything belongs to you. You are the main subject of the śrutis:

yas tv avijñānavān bhavaty ayuktena manasā sadā
tasyendriyāṇy avaśyāni duṣṭāśvā iva sāratheḥ
yas tu vijñānavān bhavati yuktena manasā sadā
tasyendriyāṇi vaśyāni sad-aśvā iva sāratheḥ
yas tv avijñānavān bhavaty amanaskaḥ sadā'śuciḥ
na sa tat-padam āpnoti saṁsāraṁ cādhigacchati
yas tu vijñānavān bhavati sa-manaskaḥ sadā śuciḥ
sa tu tat-padam āpnoti yasmād bhūyo na jāyate
vijñāna-sārathir yas tu manaḥ pragrahavān naraḥ
so'dhvanaḥ pāram āpnoti tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam
indriyebhyaḥ parā hy arthā arthebhyaś ca paraṁ manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir buddher ātmā mahān paraḥ
mahataḥ parama-vyaktam avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ
puruṣān na paraṁ kiṁcit sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatiḥ

The individual is the passenger in the car of the material body, and the intelligence is the driver. The mind is the driving

instrument, and the senses are the horses. The self is thus the enjoyer or sufferer in the association of the mind and senses. So it is understood by great thinkers. For a fool who does not control his mind, the senses are wild horses drawing the charioteer. For the wise man who controls his mind, the senses are good horses obedient to the charioteer. An impious fool who does not control his mind does not attain the spiritual world. He attains the world of repeated birth and death. A pious wise man who controls his mind attains the spiritual world. He never again takes birth. A person who has transcendental knowledge as a charioteer, and who tightly holds the reins of the mind, attains the path's final destination: the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu. The sense-objects are higher than the senses. The mind is higher than the sense-objects. Intelligence is higher than the mind. The mahat-tattva is higher than the intelligence. The avyakta (prakṛti) is higher than the mahat. The puruṣa (person) is higher than the unmanifested (avyakta). Nothing is higher than Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is the highest. Kaṭha Upaniṣad

Also there is the statement aupaniṣadaḥ puruṣaḥ: the Lord is to be known by the Upaniṣads. (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad)

Text 87.27

tava pari ye caranty akhila-sattva-niketatayā
ta uta padākramanty avigaṇayya śiro nirṛteḥ
parivayase paśūn iva girā vibudhān api tāṁs
tvayi kṛta-sauhṛdāḥ khalu punanti na ye vimukhāḥ

The devotees who worship you as the shelter of all beings disregard death and place their feet on his head. But with the words of the Vedas you bind the nondevotees like animals, though they are vastly learned scholars. It is your affectionate devotees who can purify themselves and others, not those who are inimical to you.

COMMENTARY: Some śrutis inclined to bhakti speak. What is the use of jñāna, devoid of prema for you, and difficult to perform? Service to you, filled with the highest prema, which yields that result, is the best because it provides shelter for everyone or because it is the shelter of all śuddha-sattva forms and qualities, or because it causes absorption of everyone's antaḥ-karaṇa. That service is the best because it produces the highest

prema. Since it is everyone's highest attainment, liberation is a side effect. By the Lord's mercy this liberation will not be contradictory to the prema.

Those who practice jñāna cannot escape from the natural bondage created by the words of ordinance and forbiddance in the Vedas, which are filled with your māyā. Your devotees disregard the head of death. They do not give it any regard and surpass it. They become liberated. You tie up those who have knowledge as defined in the śrutis because only those who become friendly to you, who desire to serve you in prema, become purified, whereas those who do not serve do not become purified.

śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho
kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhaye
teṣām asau kleśala eva śiṣyate
nānyad yathā sthūla-tuṣāvaghātinām

O Lord! If fools give up bhakti the all-inclusive path and suffer to attain realization of ātmā without bhakti, they attain simply suffering and nothing else. They are like fools who beat emply husk. SB 10.14.4

The śrutis say:

juṣṭaṁ yadā paśyaty anyam īśam
asya mahimānam iti vīta-śokaḥ
ṛco 'kṣare pare vyoman
yasmin devā adhi viśve niṣeduḥ
yas taṁ veda kim ṛcā kariṣyati
ya it tad vidus ta ime samāsate

The Supreme Lord is he who is referred to by the mantras of the Ṛg Veda, who resides in the topmost, eternal sky, and who elevates his saintly devotees to share that same position. One who has developed pure love for him and realizes his uniqueness then appreciates his glories and is freed from sorrow. What further good can the Ṛg mantras bestow on one who knows that Supreme Lord? All who come to know him, achieve the supreme destination. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.7–8

The service to the Lord (juṣṭam) is shown in this verse:

yo vedānām adhipo yasmiṁ lokā adhiśrītāḥ
ya īśo 'sya dvipadaś catuṣpadas tasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema

To him who is the master of all the Vedas, in whom all planets rest, who is the Lord of all known creatures, both the two-legged and the four-legged—to him we offer our worship with oblations of ghee. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.13

Text 87.28

tvam akaraṇaḥ sva-rāḍ akhila-kāraka-śakti-dharas
tava balim udvahanti samadanty ajayānimiṣāḥ
varṣa-bhujo 'khila-kṣiti-pater iva viśva-sṛjo
vidadhati yatra ye tv adhikṛtā bhavataś cakitāḥ

Though you have no material senses, you are the self-effulgent sustainer of everyone's sensory powers. The devatās and material nature herself offer you tribute, while also enjoying the tribute offered to them by their worshipers, just as subordinate rulers of various districts in a kingdom offer tribute to their lord, the ultimate proprietor of the land, while also enjoying the tribute paid them by their own subjects. In this way the universal creators faithfully execute their assigned services out of fear of you.

COMMENTARY: Other śrutis nourish the previous statement. You are without action in regards to creating the universe. You are not like a potter making a pot. You are without relationship to the senses, though you make the senses of the jīvas and Brahmā operate. You remain separate from the senses. You support the śakti for all the senses, since you have unlimited śaktis manifesting in different ways, with billions of senses, though you do not reveal your own senses to others. Sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādam: the Lord has his hands and legs all over the universe. BG 13.14

You give śakti wherever it is necessary, in small portions. "Why?" You shine with your own acintya-śakti (svarāṭ). Your senses do not depend on being manifested like those of the jīva.

The devatās like Brahmā offer you tribute. That is fine, but their controller is māyā. They offer tribute along with māyā (ajayā). The previous śrutis spoke correctly in saying that those who serve you surpass death.

na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate
na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate

parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

He has no body and no senses. No one is equal to him or higher. His supreme power is manifold. He has intrinsic knowledge, strength and action. Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad

apāṇi-pādo javano grahītā
paśyaty acakṣuḥ sa śṛṇoty akarṇaḥ
sa vetti vedyaṁ na ca tasya vettā
tam āhur agryaṁ puruṣaṁ purāṇam

He has no feet or hands, yet he is the swiftest runner and can grasp anything. Though without eyes or ears, he sees and hears. Nobody knows him, the Lord. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

Text 87.29

sthira-cara-jātayaḥ syur ajayottha-nimitta-yujo
vihara udīkṣayā yadi parasya vimukta tataḥ
na hi paramasya kaścid aparo na paraś ca bhaved
viyata ivāpadasya tava śūnya-tulāṁ dadhataḥ

O eternally liberated Lord, though you sport with your devotees, after glancing at them with spiritual power, your material energy causes the various moving and nonmoving species of life to appear, by activating their material desires. You, the Supreme Lord, see no one in the world as an intimate friend and no one as a stranger, just as the ethereal sky has no connection with perceptible qualities. In this sense you resemble a void.

COMMENTARY: Bhagavān, endowed with all attractive qualities, the mover of the senses, should be worshipped by all the jīvas who possess meager qualities and dependent senses. This was confirmed in previous statements. His superior śakti was shown. Now other śrutis come forward.

You are not only the cause, but are also responsible for the manifestation of the bodies of the living entities. O Lord beyond prakṛti (vimukta)! Though you are seen playing (viharaḥ) in the world in order to give happiness to your devotees here, after (tataḥ) glancing attractively at your perfect devotees in this world, all the jīvas, endowed the subtle bodies that

produce higher and lower bodies and engaged by karma agitated by the prakṛti, make their appearance. That glance is purely spiritual, since it is previous to the agitation of prakrṭi and is eternal (ajayā). Īkṣater nāśabdam: Brahman (who glances) is not inexpressible by words. (Brahma-sūtra 1.1.5) What is your nature? You are endowed with your extraordinary svarūpa-śakti (parasya). "Why do I not glance so that the jīvas awaken, just as Ihe does for those with whom Ihe desires pastimes?" Since you are without infatuation for persons with material qualities (paramasya), you have no attraction for inferior or superior persons in the world. You are not obstructed since you do not have attraction and repulsion.

samo 'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ
ye bhajanti tu māṁ bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpy aham

I am equal to all living beings. I do not hate anyone nor do I favor anyone. But those who worship me with devotion are in me, and I am in them. BG 9.29

Mad bhaktānāṁ vinodārthaṁ karomi vividhāḥ kriyāḥ: I perform various pastimes for the pleasure of my devotees. (Padma Puraṇa)

Why are these jīvas not attracted to you, since you are the cause of pastimes? You appear to be void. You are invisible like the sky. The meaning is this. Though the sky is real, no one can grasp it since it is impossible to grasp. You are not visible to all because they lack bhakti. Therefore, they should receive bhakti from the devotees.

sa aikṣata

The Lord glanced (Taittirīya Upanisād)

yathāgneḥ kṣudrāḥ

The jīvas are like sparks of a fire. Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.1.20

akṣarāt parataḥ paraḥ

The Lord is superior to prakṛtithe akṣara. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad

asad vā idam agre āsīt

The Lord existed before the universe. Ṛg Veda 10.1.29

sandṛṣe tiṣṭhati rūpam asya

The Supreme Lord's form is not like that. Kaṭha Upaniṣad

sad rūpam advayaṁ brahma madhyādy anta-vivarjitam
suprabhaṁ sac cidānandaṁ bhaktyā jānāti cāvyayam

By bhakti one knows the Lord with an eternal, non-dual form, devoid of beginning, middle and end, full of consciousness and bliss, and indestructible. Vāsudeva Upaniṣad

Text 87.30

aparimitā dhruvās tanu-bhṛto yadi sarva-gatās
tarhi na śāsyateti niyamo dhruva netarathā
ajani ca yan-mayaṁ tad avimucya niyantṛ bhavet
samam anujānatāṁ yad amataṁ mata-duṣṭatayā

O shelter of everything! If the jīvas were unlimited and eternal, and all powerful, the scriptures would not say that they are under your control. But the jīvas are not so, and are under your control. The product, which has the qualities of the cause, cannot be separated from the cause. The cause is thus the controller of the effect. Those who think you are like other objects are in ignorance since they reject the conclusion of scripture.

COMMENTARY: Some śrutis decide to define the jīva in order to show that they should have bhakti for the Lord. Some say that there is only one conscious entity spread everywhere, which becomes unlimited jīvas by upādhis of prominent rajas and tamas arising from avidyā (ignorance). By predominance of sattva-guṇa that consciousness becomes the Supreme Lord. Others say that jīvas arise when pure consciousness takes shelter of avidyā. By rejecting that position, others say that the jīvas are by their nature perfect, infinite, eternal and full of power like the Lord.

Previously deciding to defeat the idea that the jīva is independently perfect, accepting the unlimited and eternal nature as a possible condition of the jīva by using the word "if", the śrutis then refute this hypothesis. O shelter of everything (dhruva)! If the jīvas were unlimited and eternal, and consequently all-pervading (meaning powerful), the jīvas would not be under your control as defined in the scriptures, since your power would not extend to them. And if they are not all-powerful, then one cannot say

that the definition does not apply to them, since your power would then extend to them.

No object is independent of you. By your knowledge, all beings become empowered with knowledge. It is also said that all jīvas arise from you. Thus, they are under your control by the extension of your powers. The effects, such as a spark arising from fire, cannot be separated from fire. Spreading over the whole object by a portion of its śakti or a portion of its svarūpa, the fire becomes the controller. In its absence the spark would not have qualities of fire.

Those who say that you are simply like other objects and accept that as a fact do not know your form as antaryāmī. Such opinions reject the knowledge given in the śrutis (duṣṭatayā). Like the sun and its rays and particles of light, from you the taṭastha-śakti arises in the form of small particles. By their special power, the jīvas then give life to their bodies like magnets, in the manner of guṇād vā: the ātmā pervades the body like light. (Brahma-sūtra 2.3.24) Mahān aja ātmā: the ātmā is unborn and great (possesses consciousness). (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad) Mahā means "having consciousness" in the context. The ātmā spreads its influence just as a great gem spreads its influence. In this way, it is concluded that jīva is subject to control. The jīva is a servant and thus bhakti is proven, as previously and later.

yathā prakāśayaty ekaḥ kṛtsnaṁ lokam imaṁ raviḥ
kṣetraṁ kṣetrī tathā kṛtsnaṁ prakāśayati bhārata

Just as one sun lights up the whole world, this ātmā illuminates the whole body, O descendent of Bharata. BG 13.34

Kṛṣṇa speaks to Uddhava, indicating his own unlimited greatness and the jīva's smallness. Mahatāṁ ca mahān aham sūkṣmāṇām apy ahaṁ jīvaḥ: among great things I am the total material creation; among subtle things I am the jīva. SB 11.16.11

bālāgra-śataśo bhāgaḥ kalpito yaḥ sahasra-dhā
tasyāpi śataśo bhāgo jīva ity abhidhīyate

If a tip of the hair is divided into hundred pieces and then each into a thousand, and then each piece is again divided into a hundred, that is the size of the jīva. Viṣṇu-dharmottara

Śruti says:

bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sa cānantyāya kalpate

When the upper point of a hair is divided into one hundred parts and again each of such parts is further divided into one hundred parts, each such part is the measurement of the dimension of the spirit soul. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ

The one Lord is hidden in all jīvas. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

na tat-samas abhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate

The Lord has no equal or superior. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

One should see the details in the Paramātmā and Bhagavat Sandarbhas.

Text 87.31

na ghaṭata udbhavaḥ prakṛti-pūruṣayor ajayor
ubhaya-yujā bhavanty asu-bhṛto jala-budbuda-vat
tvayi ta ime tato vividha-nāma-guṇaiḥ parame
sarita ivārṇave madhuni lilyur aśeṣa-rasāḥ

Neither material nature nor the soul who tries to enjoy her are ever born, yet living bodies come into being when these two combine, pervaded by you, just as bubbles form where water and air join with ākāśa. And just as rivers merge into the ocean or the nectar from many different flowers blends into honey, so all these conditioned beings eventually merge back into you, the Supreme, along with their various names and qualities.

COMMENTARY: According to the previous verse, it was established that the Lord pervades the jīvas just as fire pervades sparks. Now other śrutis, following that conclusion, make their own conclusion based on that. There are two types of characteristics in effects: those arising later as unessential and those which follow logically because of connection or disconnection with something else. The former is not so pleasing since the perception does not take place at the same time as the effect. But the taste can be experienced later in the object.

The jīva has no beginning. Why? It is without birth. Ajām ekām: the ātmā is without birth. (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad) Prakṛti and the jīva, like the Lord, have no beginning and no end.

Prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva viddhy anādī ubhāv api: material nature and the living entities should be understood to be beginningless. (BG 13.20) The previous verse mentioned birth (ajani), but that was an appearance of birth to show the pervasive nature of the Lord. You are one with both of them (ubhaya-yujā). You pervade both jīva and prakṛti. Your expansion as the puruṣa "created" jīvas by these two śaktis: the jīvas are "born" in the sense of accepting the upādhi of prakṛti. They are born like bubbles—ākāśa combined with water and air.

However, you are the material cause.

prakṛtir yasyopādānam ādhāraḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ
sato 'bhivyañjakaḥ kālo brahma tat tritayaṁ tv aham

Prakrți is the material cause and the puruṣa is the foundational cause. Time, the indirect cause, is agitator of prakṛti. I am all three. SB 11.24.19

You pervade them by your very nature, since you have unlimited śakti. Viṣṇu Purāṇa says:

pradhānaṁ ca pumāṁś caiva sarva-bhūtātma-bhūtayā
viṣṇu-śaktyā mahābuddhe vṛtau saṁśraya-dharmiṇau

Prakṛti and jīva, whose qualities depend on the Lordhis, operate by Viṣṇu's śakti which gives rise to all the bodies of the jīva.

The jīvas enter you at the time of the destruction of the universe and on achieving liberation.

Just as the water of a river merges in the ocean, so the names and qualities of the jīvas are destroyed in you. But the svarūpa of the jīva does not become one with you since the jīvas are separate particles.

etās tisro devatā anena jīvenātmanānupraviśya nāmarūpe vyākaravāṇi

Entering the three devatās as jīva, I will reveal name and form. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.3.2

yathā saumya madhu madhu-kṛto nistiṣṭhanti nānātyayānāṁ vṛkṣānāṁ
rasān samavahāram ekatāṁ saṅgayanti. te yathā tatra na vivekaṁ

labhante amuṣyāhaṁ vṛkṣasya raso 'smy amuṣyāham raso 'smīty evam eva khalu saumyemāḥ sarvāḥ prajāḥ sati sampadya na viduḥ sati sampadyāmahe:

My dear boy the partial dissolution resembles what happens when honeybees collect honey by extracting the nectar from the flowers of various kinds of trees and merge it all into a single mixture. Just as the mixed nectars cannot distinguish, 'I am the juice of such-and-such a flower,' or 'I am the juice of another flower,' so, dear boy, when all these living entities merge together, they cannot consciously think, 'Now we have merged together.' Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.9.1–2

Text 87.32

nṛṣu tava mayayā bhramam amīṣv avagatya bhṛśaṁ
tvayi su-dhiyo 'bhave dadhati bhāvam anuprabhavam
katham anuvartatāṁ bhava-bhayaṁ tava yad bhru-kuṭiḥ
sṛjati muhus tri-nemir abhavac-charaṇeṣu bhayam

The wise souls who understand how your māyā deludes all human beings attain a state of constant bliss, and understand that you stop birth and death. How can the fear of material life affect your faithful servants? On the other hand, your furrowing eyebrows—the triple-rimmed wheel of time—repeatedly terrify those who refuse to take shelter of you.

COMMENTARY: Taking the opportunity from what was previously said—how the Lord removes the fear of material existence, some other śrutis whose conclusion is bhakti praise Kṛṣṇa. Jīvas who have been wandering in the world because of māyā, becoming spiritually intelligent by association with devotees, cannot give up bhakti because of the sweet experience. They understand that you can stop the fear of material existence which makes one wander about in illusion. They attain a state of constant bliss (anuprabhavam). Or they maintain that state birth after birth. In any case, because of the great sweetness they cannot give it up.

sā hānis tan mahac-chidraṁ sa mohaḥ sa ca vibhramaḥ
yan muhūrtaṁ kṣaṇaṁ vāpi vāsudevaṁ na cintayet

If even for a moment remembrance of Vāsudeva, the Supreme Lord, is missed, that is the greatest loss, that is the greatest illusion, and that is the

greatest anomaly. Viṣṇu Purāṇa

nātha yoni-sahasreṣu yeṣu yeṣu vrajāmy aham
teṣu teṣv acyutā bhaktir acyutāstu sadā tvayi

Wherever I may wander, O master, among thousands of species of life, in each situation may I have firmly fixed devotion to you, O Acyuta. Viṣṇu Purāṇa

na vai jano jātu kathañcanāvrajen
mukunda-sevy anyavad aṅga saṁsṛtim
smaran mukundāṅghry-upagūhanaṁ punar
vihātum icchen na rasa-graho janaḥ

Oh! The person who serves Mukunda will never under any condition return to the material world, unlike practitioners of other processes. Remembering the embrace of the Lord's lotus feet, eager for that taste he has experienced, he will not desire to give up those feet again. SB 1.5.19

Do not those who have bhakti desire to give up those feet? No. Those absorbed in bliss pay no attention to the condition in the material world. They have no fear of it. The causes of fear in the world are destroyed by their state of transcendence. This is stated with kaimutya.

sakṛd eva prapanno yas tavāsmīti ca yācate
abhayaṁ sarvadā tasmai dadāmy etad vrataṁ mama

If one surrenders unto me sincerely, saying, 'My Lord, from this day I am fully surrendered unto you,' I always give him protection. That is my vow. Rāmāyaṇa, Yuddha-kāṇḍa 18.33

Just by surrender, one loses all fear. Your frown consisting of time past, present and future, gives fear to those who do not surrender.

parītya bhūtāni parītya lokān parītya sarvāḥ pradiśo diśaś ca
upasthāya prathama-jāmṛtasyāmanātmānam abhisaṁviveśa

After passing beyond all the species of life, all the planetary systems and all the limits of space in all directions, one approaches the original soul of immortality. Then one receives the opportunity to enter permanently into his domain and worship him with personal service. Vājasaneyī-saṁhitā (32.11) of the Śukla Yajur Veda

kālena naṣṭā pralaye vāṇīyaṁ veda-saṁjñitā
mayādau brahmaṇe proktā dharmo yasyāṁ mad-ātmakaḥ

By the influence of time, the Vedic knowledge was lost at the time of annihilation. Therefore, when the subsequent creation took place, I spoke to Brahmā the Vedic knowledge in which bhakti is the essence. SB 11.1.43

Thus the message of bhakti is spoken by the Lord himself. Or the śrutis, unable to tolerant the proposal of liberation, speak this verse. Among those who are not your devotees—those desiring liberation, some wander around by māyā and concentrate on practice devoid of happiness of bhakti. The śrutis supporting this verse have already been given in previous commentaries.

Text 87.33

vijita-hṛṣīka-vāyubhir adānta-manas tura-gaṁ
ya iha yatanti yantum ati-lolam upāya-khidaḥ
vyasana-śatānvitāḥ samavahāya guroś caraṇaṁ
vaṇija ivāja santy akṛta-karṇa-dharā jaladhau

The mind is like an impetuous horse that even persons who have regulated their senses and breath cannot control. People in this world who try to tame the uncontrolled mind but who abandon the feet of their spiritual master encounter hundreds of obstacles in their cultivation of various distressful practices. O unborn Lord, they are like merchants on a boat in the ocean, who have failed to employ a helmsman.

COMMENTARY: Hearing this verse, other śrutis speak. We will now praise, taking shelter of guru's feet. All guruship ends in teachings about you. Without the guru's influence, bhāva for you cannot be attained. He is also the cause of the destruction of saṁsāra. Merely stopping the mind will not do this.

yuñjānānām abhaktānāṁ prāṇāyāmādibhir manaḥ
akṣīṇa-vāsanaṁ rājan dṛśyate punar utthitam

The minds of nondevotees who engage in such practices as prāṇāyama are not fully cleansed of material desires. Thus, O King, material desires are again seen to arise in their minds. SB 10.51.6

Without bhakti to you, this cannot be achieved. The verse is then spoken.

O you who are beyond the sight of jīvas born with material bodies (aja)! Those who give up the feet of the guru, even not taking shelter a little, encounter hundreds of obstacles, since by their nature they have minds which are like horses. They try to control by controlling prāṇa and senses but suffer from these methods. Without a guru's influence they become overwhelmed with obstacles. Even with much practice, they are like a merchant travelling on the ocean with no captain. They remain in the ocean of saṁsāra. They do not cross the ocean. They do not attain you, who are like an island of bliss in that ocean. Śruti in this regard is:

tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham

To understand these things properly, one must humbly approach, with firewood in hand, a spiritual master who is learned in the Vedas and firmly devoted to the Absolute Truth. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.1.12

Text 87.34

svajana-sutātma-dāra-dhana-dhāma-dharāsu-rathais
tvayi sati kiṁ nṛṇām śrayata ātmani sarva-rase
iti sad ajānatāṁ mithunato rataye caratāṁ
sukhayati ko nv iha sva-vihate sva-nirasta-bhage

To those persons who take shelter of you, you reveal yourself as the Supersoul, the embodiment of all spiritual pleasure. What further use have such devotees for their servants, children or bodies, their wives, money or houses, their land, good health or conveyances? And for those who fail to appreciate the truth about you and go on pursuing the pleasures of sex, what could there be in this entire world—a place inherently doomed to destruction and devoid of significance—that could give them real happiness?

COMMENTARY: Other śrutis decide to criticize other attachments. They worship (śrayataḥ) you, who manifest as the dearest (ātmani), without upādhis, since they understand that you are the highest svarūpa of all beings. This is not only a general manifestation or realization, but endowed

with special rasas filled with prema (sarva-rase). Mithunataḥ means mithunī-bhūya (making pairs).

na vā are patyuḥ kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavaty ātmanas tu kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavati
na vā are sarvasya kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ bhavaty ātmanas tu kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ bhavati
ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyi
ātmano vā are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānenedaṁ sarvaṁ viditam
brahma taṁ parādād yo 'nyatrātmano brahma veda
kṣatraṁ taṁ parādād yo 'nyatrātmanaḥ kṣatraṁ veda

The husband is loved not for himself but because of Paramātmā. Everything is loved because of Paramātmā. The Paramātmā should be seen, heard, considered and contemplated, O Maitreyi! Everything is known by knowing, by seeing, hearing and considering Brahman. The brāhmaṇa ostracizes one who thinks otherwise of Paramātmā. The kṣatriya ostracizes one who thinks of Paramātmā otherwise. Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.5

The ordinary ātmā should see the Paramātmā as the dearest without conditions, because of the devotee's unconditional prema, since Paramātmā respects all promises, being omniscient.

kṛṣṇam enam avehi tvam ātmānam akhilātmanām
jagad-dhitāya so 'py atra dehīvābhāti māyayā

You should know Kṛṣṇa to be the original soul of all living entities. For the benefit of the whole universe, he has, out of his causeless mercy, appeared as an ordinary human being. He has done this by the strength of his internal potency. SB 10.14.55

Text 87.35

bhuvi puru-puṇya-tīrtha-sadanāny ṛṣayo vimadās
ta uta bhavat-padāmbuja-hṛdo 'gha-bhid-aṅghri-jalāḥ
dadhati sakṛn manas tvayi ya ātmani nitya-sukhe
na punar upāsate puruṣa-sāra-harāvasathān

Sages free from false pride live on this earth by frequenting the sacred pilgrimage sites. Because such devotees keep your lotus feet within their

hearts, the water that washes their feet destroys all sins. Having turned their minds toward you, the ever-blissful soul of all existence, they no longer dedicate themselves to serving family life at home, which simply robs a man of his good qualities.

COMMENTARY: Some śrutis now confirm the proper conduct of the devotee. Those who know you as most worthy of worship (ṛṣayaḥ), who even once concentrate their minds on you, take no pleasure (na upāsate) in the places where their relatives stay, which distract them from the goal of life. Who are you? You are the supreme soul (ātmani), the form of eternal happiness, since you are the shelter of pure prema. Who are these devotees? You appear in their hearts continuously since your lotus feet are in their minds. Therefore, their foot water destroys all sins. Therefore they are the residence of most pure holy places on earth. But still they are free of pride.

Or, because they are free of pride, they do not take pleasure in their relatives' houses. By that relationship their houses, they make houses into holy places, but they do not stay there. They take pleasure in the pure holy places on earth. In both cases, all this occurs because you are the best holy place. The śrutis which glorify holy places end up glorifying the Lord.

bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi tasmin dṛṣṭe parāvare

The knot in the heart is pierced, all misgivings are cut to pieces, and the chain of fruitive actions is terminated when one sees the Supreme Lord everywhere, within all superior and inferior beings. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 2.2.9

namaḥ paramarṣibhyo namaḥ paramarthibhyaḥ

Obeisances to the topmost sages, obeisances to the topmost sages! Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.2.11

Text 87.36

sata idaṁ utthitaṁ sad iti cen na nu tarka-hataṁ
vyabhicarati kva ca kva ca mṛṣā na tathobhaya-yuk
vyavahṛtaye vikalpa iṣito 'ndha-paramparayā
bhramayati bhāratī ta uru-vṛttibhir uktha-jaḍān

The universe arises from the real Lord. If one claims the world is also the Lord, that claim cannot be true since it is illogical. Sometimes objects in the world are very different from the Lord. Some say the world is illusory but it is not. The Lord also is not illusory or the cause of illusion. The illusory world is imaginary. Real objects are necessary for transacting in the world. The theory of illusions is insubstantial like a series of blind men. The words of the Vedas with their meanings also bewilder persons whose senses are dulled by the sacrificial mantras.

COMMENTARY: "Why do relatives' houses steal away human goals since the world should be filled with eternity, knowledge and bliss? Since it has arisen from you, it is like the transformation of gold into ornaments. It should be the same as you." The scriptures say the world arose from you. Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante: the living beings are born from the Lord. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 3.1) The world is not some imposition (falsity). The meaning of the word jan is well known. It means "to give birth to." It cannot mean the world is some illusory object (vivarta). If one were to take a secondary meaning of the word using some other logic, according to vivarata-vāda, since the world is false and only Brahman is true, the śruti could not make statements like "They hold your lotus feet in their hearts" (verse 35) since the Lord with form would be detestable. They could not say "They do not care for liberation" (verse 21), since such persons would be detestable.

With the doubt raised, the śrutis say there is not just one entity in existence, and the world is not a false imposition on Brahman, but simply a temporary manifestation. They illustrate what was previously stated by other śrutis.

In response to the point raised, the śrutis deny absolute monism in their first words. Sataḥ refers to the first cause as in sad eva saumyedam agre āsīt: the cause existed before the world, O gentle one! (Chāndogya Upaniṣad) This world (idam) arose from you, the first cause (sataḥ), the form of eternity, knowledge and bliss. If you say that it is identical (sat) with the Lord, that cannot be. It is only similar. Nu indicates conjecture. That proposition is refuted by logic. There is difference because one can see different states in the form of the cause and effect. For instance, a gold nugget has a different form than a gold ring. Nor can one say that the Lord

transformed into the world, since this contradicts the eternal existence of the Lord. Therefore the world arose from the Lord like various objects arise from the cintāmaṇi stone. This being so, the different nature of the world is then described.

The world is different from you (vyabhicarati), since it does not have your qualities. The world does not have a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss. “Why can we not say that the world is like a transformation of Brahman like seeing the rope as a snake by mistake?” The snake is false, an imposition on a rope. Therefore it does not arise from the rope. The universe arises from the Lord. He is the source of qualities (utthitam). This is stated in the scriptures. “One could say that scripture also arises from the Lord in the same way and is thus different from him or illusory.” It cannot be said that the Lord is either a false imposition or the cause of false imposition (ubhaya-yuk) since he is not a material object. Vivarta-vāda logic itself becomes illusory like the snake according to its general application of false imposition. In specific application, this idea becomes the object of ridicule by its very manifestation.

And it cannot be accepted that all difference is finally destroyed. The universe is not just an appearance since it is useful. It is not like the mirage of water in the desert. This conception of the world is itself imaginary. Illusory objects are not like gold which can be used in transactions or in making medicines; illusory objects cannot be used for donation for gaining piety. From the perspective of persons with knowledge, such an imaginary world is like a series of blind men. Or, for accomplishing tasks in the world, vivarta-vāda should have a succession of real objects (rather than illusions based on illusions), but this becomes a fault for the advaita-vādī, since it would destroy advaita-vāda. This is mentioned in Śārīraka-bhāṣya in the section refuting vijñāna-vāda. Vivarta-vāda creates insubstantiality because of the defective series of illusions reaching to infinity, and it destroys dealings in the world. Intentions could never be fulfilled (since everything would be an illusion.)

“Who purchased this gold?” In answer to this, one may answer, “It was purchased by a blind man.” “How did he know about gold?” “He knew from another blind man.” “How did he know?” “He knew from another blind man.” In this way there is an infinite regression of blind men. If in the

series of blind men there is one person with sight, he can be the first to know about the gold. Thus the action can be resolved. The issue is resolved by one man with sight among them all.

Similarly, if one object is real, then a false conception of that object can be explained. Without a real object one cannot see an illusion of that object or deal with it. In this manner, illusion in the world can be resolved. Like an eternal object, the object which was a source of illusion exists, with real variety, as with shell and silver. One cannot see real falsity anywhere since it is impossible to produce false things from the mind or other elements. One can only see falsity related to real objects. Then it is called an illusion. Thus there is an illusion of silver on seeing a shining seashell.

Atheists then rise up, supporting their argument that the material world is eternal with śruti statements like apāma somam amṛtā abhūma: we drank soma and became immortal. (Ṛg Veda 8.18.3) The śrutis then answer as follows. Such words bewilder persons whose minds are dulled by sacrificial mantras (uktha). However, the Mīmāṁsa scholar Bhaṭṭa accepts the creation of the universe by the Lord. Creation and destruction are accepted because they are stated in the histories and Purāṇas. Therefore, the world is not a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss, nor is it illusory. It is a temporary form only.

yathorṇa-nābhiḥ sṛjate gṛhṇate ca
yathā pṛthivyām oṣadhayaḥ sambhavanti
yathā sataḥ puruṣāt keśa-lomāni
tathākṣarāt sambhavatīha viśvam

As a web is expanded and withdrawn by a spider, as plants grow from the earth, and as hair grows from a living person's head and body, so this universe is generated from the inexhaustible Supreme Lord. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.1.7

The word akṣarāt (from the inexhaustible, unchanging Lord) indicates that the world produced from the Lord is different from him.

Text 87.37

na yad idam agra āsa na bhaviṣyad ato nidhanād
anu mitam antarā tvayi vibhāti mṛṣaika-rase

ata upamīyate draviṇa-jāti-vikalpa-pathair
vitatha-mano-vilāsam ṛtam ity avayanty abudhāḥ

If the universe were not created after destruction, it could not be said that it came from you. After destruction and during maintenance, it exists in you, who remain pure. It appears false to others, by imagining it to be made of illusory objects. Those who speak these mental concoctions and those claim that the world is completely non-different from you are fools.

COMMENTARY: "Since this universe did not exist prior to its creation and will no longer exist after its annihilation, we conclude that in the interim it is nothing more than a manifestation imagined to be visible within you, whose spiritual enjoyment never changes. We liken this universe to the transformation of various material substances into diverse forms. Certainly those who believe that this figment of the imagination is substantially real are less intelligent. Why should we not reject the world which is an illusory transformation?"

Other śrutis, drawing the conclusion, confirm what was previously spoken. If (yat) this universe after destruction had no creation, it could not be said to arise from you. It would be like creating oil from sand. The universe (idam) remains in a subtle form. Sad eva somyedam agra āsīt: the universe in subtle form existed before the creation of the universe. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad) Nāsad āsīn no sad āsīt tadānīm: at that time neither the subtle nor the gross aspects of matter were present. (Ṛg Veda 10.129.1) This denies the universe existing in a visible form after destruction. After destruction and during the time of maintenance (antarā) the universe exists in you alone, who are pure (eka-rase). Yad bhūtaṁ bhavac ca bhaviṣyac ca: the Lord is everything that has ever existed, exists now or will ever exist." (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.8.4) Ayam ātmāpahata-pāpmā: the Lord is without sin. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.1.5)

It appears false to the unintelligent (mṛṣā). The meaning is this. The universe arises because you have śakti, which you and no one else places in pradhāna. Maintenance and destruction are similar. But completely unlike the universe, you remain unchanged, untouched by the external energy, by the power of your internal energy. Arjuna says:

tvam ādyaḥ puruṣaḥ sākṣād īśvaraḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ
māyāṁ vyudasya cic-chaktyā kaivalye sthita ātmani

You are the original Lord, the controller, beyond material energy. You are situated in your spiritual form, being one with your spiritual energy, and separate from the material energy. SB 1.7.23

By lack of intelligence, it is inferred that everything is just an illusion of objects. But previously it was said na hi vikṛtiṁ tyajanti kanakasya tad-ātmatayā: just as things made of gold are not to be rejected, since their substance is actual gold, so this world is to be accepted as real, being a manifestation from the Lord, who created it and then entered within it. (SB 10.87.26) Objects are accepted as real like you. Those who speak about these fantasies of the mind and those who say that the world is completely non-different from you (ṛtam) are all fools. All their ideas are only in the mind, and cannot give them liberation from matter. Relevant śrutis have already been shown.

Text 87.38

sa yad ajayā tv ajām anuśayīta guṇāṁś ca juṣan
bhajati sarūpatāṁ tad anu mṛtyum apeta-bhagaḥ
tvam uta jahāsi tām ahir iva tvacam ātta-bhago
mahasi mahīyase ’ṣṭa-guṇite ’parimeya-bhagaḥ

The jīva contacts matter by the influence of māyā, takes on a material form due to upādhis, and enjoys material objects. He thus experiences saṁsāra. You, however, avoid the material energy in the same way that a snake abandons its old skin. Glorious in your possession of eight mystic powers, you display unlimited greatness.

COMMENTARY: When the śrutis showed that the Lord is untouched by matter and different from the jīvas, some other śrutis in agreement praise the Lord. “The world is different from me because it is insentient. But the jīva is similar to Lord since it is indestructible and conscious. Why should the jīva worship me as some śrutis previously said?” The śrutis then explain the difference between the jīva and the Lord in order to explain that the jīva should worship him.

The jīva is different because, by his nature, his bliss and other qualities are covered. That is logical since the jīva is just an aṁśa of the Lord. Śrīdhara Svāmī gives the meaning of the verse. This description is found in the Bhagavat Sandarbha commentary. Or, since the jīva is bewildered (śayīta) by māyā, because of his ignorance of his svarūpa (anu), he becomes endowed with a particular form, partakes of similarity to the upādhis of māyā (sa-rūpatām), enjoys objects and experiences saṁsāra (anumṛtyum).

One entity is influenced by matter because of having upādhis. Another entity however is not so influenced. These different natures (of the Lord and the jīva) should be understood from seeing the difference in their powers. This is understood from Brahmā's prayers.

Śruti says:

dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānaṁ vṛkṣaṁ pariṣasvajāte
tayor anyaḥ pippalaṁ svādv atty anaśnann anyo 'bhicākaśīti

Two companion birds sit together in the shelter of the same pippala tree. One of them is relishing the taste of the tree's berries while the other refrains from eating and instead watches over his friend. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.6

Text 87.39

yadi na samuddharanti yatayo hṛdi kāma-jaṭā
duradhigamo 'satāṁ hṛdi gato 'smṛta-kaṇṭha-maṇiḥ
asu-tṛpa-yogināṁ ubhayato 'py asukhaṁ bhagavann
anapagatāntakād anadhirūḍha-padād bhavataḥ

Members of the renounced order who fail to uproot the last traces of material desire in their hearts remain impure, and thus you do not allow them to understand you. Although you are present within their hearts, because they have other interests, for them you are like a jewel worn around the neck, but which is totally forgotten. O Lord, those who practice yoga only for sense gratification are deprived of enjoyment and the bliss of your association since they continue to suffer and do not become attracted to your lotus feet.

COMMENTARY: Śrutis teaching bhakti mixed with jñāna and yoga speak. They cannot tolerate even a little devotion to other methods for attaining

regular practice of bhakti. If those who cannot control their external senses, even though they are sannyāsīs, cannot uproot all desires for enjoyment in the heart, they concentrate on you (duradhigamaḥ) only with difficulty, even though you reside in the minds of these non-devotees who have attained high positions so that they can perfect jñāna.

"Though you are very hard to attain, by good fortune you can be attained. If that is the case, how will you exist in this condition?" I am like a jewel worn around the neck but forgotten when the person becomes attached to enjoyment. Yogīs who want to enjoy the senses take to your worship for the perfection of yoga, but remain unsatisfied in sense enjoyment and in your worship because they do not become free of suffering and do not become attracted to your lotus feet (padam). By taking to your lotus feet, all previous objects become unattractive. Illustrations from śruti were given previously.

Text 87.40

tvad avagamī na vetti bhavad-uttha-śubhāśubhayor
guṇa-viguṇānvayāṁs tarhi deha-bhṛtāṁ ca giraḥ
anu-yugam anv-ahaṁ sa-guṇa gīta-paramparayā
śravaṇa-bhṛto yatas tvam apavarga-gatir manu-jaiḥ

When a person realizes you, he no longer cares about his good and bad fortune arising from past pious and sinful acts, since it is you alone who control this good and bad fortune. Such a realized devotee also disregards what ordinary living beings say about him. Every day he fills his ears with your glories, which are recited in each age by the unbroken succession of Manu's descendants, and thus you become his ultimate goal. You are the shelter of even liberation.

COMMENTARY: Hearing this, some śrutis fully dedicated to the Lord express themselves with enthusiasm. Those who realize the truth about you do not know happiness and distress arising from prārabhda-karmas, pious or impious, which become established as shadows by you, since they cannot remain by the power of bhakti. The devotees want to protect their bodies only for doing abundant sādhana. They cannot realize whether happiness and distress exist or not. Not recognizing happiness and distress, they then do not recognize other persons' words which speak of rules and

prohibitions. Or, they do not recognize criticism or praise. Or the person who realizes you does not recognize good or bad qualities of piety or sin performed by living beings which produces their birth (bhavat) in different bodies. He does not think, “Who did this or why did he do this?” He does not recognize what produces auspicious or inauspicious results. He does not recognize words of others concerning himself in the form of praise or criticism since he is absorbed in the bliss of realizing you. Then what does he do? An example is given, showing the succession of great devotees. Because of realizing you (yataḥ), you are held in their hearts as they hear songs glorifying your qualities daily, in each yuga, composed by persons equal to Svayambhuva Manu. Svayambhuva is described as follows:

ayāta-yāmās tasyāsan yāmāḥ svāntara-yāpanāḥ
śṛṇvato dhyāyato viṣṇoḥ kurvato bruvataḥ kathāḥ

Since he heard about the Lord, meditated on him, spoke about him and made compositions with his words about him, his passing of time, extending for a manvantara, was not in vain. SB 3.22.35

The reason is given. You are the shelter (gatiḥ) of even liberation. You are the tenth object discussed in the Purāṇas (āśṛayaḥ). You are the highest goal for human beings.

As long as they do not know your glories from hearing, they will perform other sādhanas:

tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate

As long as one does not become detached from daily and periodic duties rites or has not awakened his faith in hearing topics about me, one must perform one’s prescribed duties rites of varṇāśrama. SB 11.20.9

How can persons like me understand you? The proper practice is explained. It is done daily, in every yuga. It should be done all the time. This practice is not difficult to do, like what was previously mentioned. Relevant śruti statements were already given.

Text 87.41

dyu-pataya eva te na yayur antam anantatayā
tvam api yad-antarāṇḍa-nicayā nanu sāvaraṇāḥ
kha iva rajāṁsi vānti vayasā saha yac chrutayas
tvayi hi phalanty atan-nirasanena bhavan-nidhanāḥ

Because you are unlimited, neither the lords of heaven nor even you yourself can ever reach the end of your glories. The countless universes, each enveloped in its shell, are compelled by the wheel of time to wander within you, like particles of dust blowing about in the sky. The śrutis, following their method of eliminating everything separate from the Supreme, become successful by revealing you as their final conclusion.

COMMENTARY: Summarizing all the contents of what they said, all types of śrutis now describe the Lord by defining his svarūpa and the glories of his svarūpa, through direct meaning (mukhya) and indirect meaning (lakṣaṇā) of words. Seeing that they cannot ever finish glorifying the Lord, taking the opportunity, some of the śrutis conclude with one verse, repeating what they said in the beginning.

Even Brahmās and Śivas (dyu-patayaḥ) of unlimited universes, stretching over unlimited time, cannot find an end to your glories. This is because you are spread over all time and space, since you are unlimited (anantatayā). Within the hair holes (antarā) of your expansion (yat) Mahā-viṣṇu, countless universes flow: they come out visibly at the time of creation and they disappear and enter those holes at the time of destruction, like atoms moving through lattice holes in a window. They move with the wheel of time which destroys them. This shows the unlimited nature of time and space. Because you are the shelter of everything by your svarūpa and powers, by your nature of unlimitedness, the śrutis, coming to a conclusion in you who are unlimited, with unlimited powers, become successful, by refuting conclusions about powers other than you (atan-nirasanena), since you alone are unlimited and have unlimited powers. They are successful because of attaining the unlimited goal.

The following should be said. Since the śrutis conclude in you by the consolidation of all the statements, explanations of individual statements in the śrutis should end by teaching about you, while refuting anything

contrary. There are many statements of refutation, but those which indicate you directly simultaneously refute the contrary statements. You are our highest goal, indicated by the completely spiritual, unlimited powers of your svarūpa, proved by us śrutis. This was said in the opening statement starting with jaya jaya.

The śrutis state his unlimited nature with yato vāco nivartante: words cannot describe him. He is the shelter of all the universes. Yad ūrdhvaṁ gārgi divaḥ: he is beyond the sky. (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad) He is the shelter of all time. Sarve nimiṣā jajñire vidyutaḥ puruṣād adhi: all the components of time were born from the shining puruṣa. (Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad) He is the meaning of all śrutis. Sarve vedā yat padam ānamanti: all the Vedas speak of the Lord's feet. (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.15)

He is the meaning of the śrutis by the negation of other conclusions such as na tasya kāryam: he does not have a material body. (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad)

Refutation takes two forms: through direct statements and through general conclusions.

na tasya kāryam

He does not have a material body. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

indro yāto vasitasya raja

He is the king of the moving and immobile beings. Ṛg Veda 1.32.15

sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma

Everything is the Lord. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 3.14

Refutation again has four forms: refuting the impersonal form, refuting material powers by showing the Lord's unlimited inherent powers, refuting impersonal sādhana and its results, and refuting arguments which use devious means, related to impersonalism.

Refuting the impersonal form:

anyad eva tad viditāt

The Lord is other than what is ordinarily known. Kena Upaniṣad

Refuting material powers:

asthulam anaṇu

The Lord is not big and not small. Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad

na tasya kāryam

The Lord has no material body. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

Refuting impersonal sādhana:

anyatra dharmād anyan ādharmāt

Tell me what is other than dharma and adharma, other than the means and end. Kaṭha Upaniṣad

Refuting crooked behavior:

naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā

One cannot obtain truth by argumentation. Kaṭha Upaniṣad

nānudhyāyed bahūn śabdān vāco viglāpanaṁ hi ta

Do not contemplate many words; it gives merely fatigue from speaking. Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.7.21

Text 87.42

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
ity etad brahmaṇaḥ putrā āśrutyātmānuśāsanam
sanandanam athānarcuḥ siddhā jñātvātmano gatim

The Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, said: Having heard these instructions about the Supreme Lord, the sons of Brahmā now understood their final goal. They felt perfectly satisfied and honored Sanandana with their worship.

COMMENTARY: Having attentively heard (āśrutvā) what the śrutis said (evam), teachings for the benefit of the jīva (ātmānuśāsanam), teaching about Svayam Bhagavān, the root form of the Lord and related matters, and therefore understanding the goal of the jīva, or the method of understanding the Lord (ātma-gatim), the sons of Brahmā felt astonishment (siddhāḥ) because of the nature of the descriptions of the Lord's powers, or felt fully satisfied in all desires.

Text 87.43

ity aśeṣa-samāmnāya-purāṇopaniṣad-rasaḥ
samuddhṛtaḥ pūrva-jātair vyoma-yānair mahātmabhiḥ

Thus the ancient saints who travel in the upper heavens distilled this nectarean and confidential essence of all the Vedas and Purāṇas.

COMMENTARY: Since the brāhmaṇas were born in the very beginning, they were the best (pūrva-jātaiḥ). They wandered about with no attachments (vyoma-yānaiḥ). They had generous minds (mahātmabhiḥ).

The best, unattached sages with generous minds, extracted the essence completely (sam-uddhṛtāḥ) from the śrutis studied under a guru. This shows their qualification. Samāmnāya indicates scripture in general. Purāṇas indicates itihāsas also. This indicates karma and upāsana. Upaniṣads indicates jñāna in works like Chāndogya and Bhagavad-gītā. Purāṇa is placed in the middle of the compound to indicate the equality of the Purāṇas with Vedas. Yad brāhmaṇān itihāsān purāṇāni: scripture consists of Brāhmaṇas, itihāsas and Purāṇas. (Svādhyāyopadeśa śruti)

evaṁ vā are asya mahato bhūtasya niśvasitam etad yad ṛg vedo yajur vedaḥ sāma vedo 'tharvāṅgirasa itihāsaḥ purāṇam.

The Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma and Atharva Vedas, the itihāsas and Purāṇas emanated from the breathing of the Lord. Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.10

ṛg vedaṁ bhagavo 'dhyemi yajur-vedaṁ sāma-vedam ātharvaṇaṁ caturtham itihāsaṁ purāṇaṁ pañcamaṁ vedānāṁ vedam

I have learned the Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma and Atharva Vedas, as well as itihāsas and Purāṇas which are called the fifth Veda. Chāndogya Upaniṣad

itihāsa-purāṇāni pañcamo veda ucyate

The itihāsas and Purāṇas are called the fifth Veda. SB 1.4.20

Everyone is qualified for these works as in the case of the Lord's name as in the rule varṣāsu rathakāro 'gnīn ādadhīte: the carpenter (usually not qualified) should light the sacrificial fires in the monsoon season. (Taittīriya Brāhmaṇa) The rasa of the words refers to the conclusion which is filled with bhakti to the Lord. Pibata bhāgavataṁ rasam: drink the rasa of Bhāgavatam. (SB 1.1.3) The rasa is of three types: in single statements, in connected statements and in whole sections of a work. The first two types have been shown. The last is in six parts:

upakramopasamhārāv abhyāso 'pūrvatā phalam
arthavādopapattī ca liṅgaṁ tātparya-nirṇaye

Initial statement, conclusion, repetition, uniqueness of the object, gain from the object, the praise of the object and proof are the topics used to discern the meaning of a passage.

The topic is declared in the verses under discussion by deducing one meaning of the famous and lesser known śrutis, revealing the meaning of praṇava, and explaining topics like creation and destruction which are present from the beginning to the end of the Vedas. Thus, the meanings of the first prayer starting with jaya jaya (Victory, you, O unconquerable one! By your very nature you are perfectly full in all powers, verse 14) which is upakrama, and the last prayer starting with dyu-patayaḥ (the devatās cannot reach the end of your glories, verse 41) which is the upasaṁhāra are the same. Sa yad ajayā tv ajām (the jīva contacts matter by māyā, verse 38) and other verses are the abhyāsa (repetition). Anucaren nigamaḥ (the Vedas confirm this, verse 14) and śrutayas tvayi hi phalanti (the Vedas find success in you, verse 41) are the apūrvatā (showing unique qualities). Na parilasanti kecit (some do not care for liberation, verse 21) shows the phala (result). Tvam akaraṇaḥ svarāṭ (you are without material senses and independent verse 28) shows arthavāda (praise). Dṛtayah iva śvasanty asubhṛtaḥ (they are like bellows breathing if they are not devotees, verse 17) shows upapatti (proof). All of this indicates Bhagavān alone, which means Kṛṣṇa, according to previous explanations.

Text 87.44

tvaṁ caitad brahma-dāyāda śraddhayātmānuśāsanam
dhārayaṁś cara gāṁ kāmaṁ kāmānāṁ bharjanaṁ nṛṇām

And as you wander the earth at will, dear son of Brahmā, you should faithfully meditate on these instructions concerning the Lord, which burn up the material desires of all men.

COMMENTARY: Nārada is shown to be qualified since he is a qualified son of Brahmā (brahma-dāyāda). Holding the teachings about Kṛṣṇa in your heart, wander the earth as you please, in order to remove the desires of men. Instead of bharjanam sometimes varjanam is seen. The meaning is the

same. Men's desires will be destroyed by establishing bhakti through hearing.

Text 87.45

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ sa ṛṣiṇādiṣṭaṁ gṛhītvā śraddhayātmavān
pūrṇaḥ śruta-dharo rājann āha vīra-vrato muniḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi ordered him in this way, the sage Nārada, with strong vows and peaceful heart, who hearing once remembered everything, who was fixed in the Lord, accepted the command with firm faith in the teachings. Now successful in all his purposes, O King, he replied to the Lord as follows.

COMMENTARY: Nārada had an undisturbed heart because he was a naiṣṭhika-brahmacārī (vīra-vrataḥ). By hearing once he remembered (śruti-dharaḥ) since he was inclined to contemplation (muniḥ) and fixed completely on the Lord (ātmavān). Therefore he accepted immediately the order given by his guru Nārāyaṇa, with convinced intelligence (śraddhayā) in the subject. With all his desires fulfilled, he then spoke. Instead of ṛṣiṇā sometimes guruṇā is seen. O King! Śukadeva encourages Parīkṣit after answering his question.

Text 87.46

śrī-nārada uvāca
namas tasmai bhagavate kṛṣṇāyāmala-kīrtaye
yo dhatte sarva-bhūtānām abhavāyośatīḥ kalāḥ

Nārada said: I offer my obeisances to him of spotless fame, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who contains within himself attractive avatāras so that all living beings can extinguish suffering.

COMMENTARY: Nārada speaks to show his satisfaction. Understanding that Kṛṣṇa is the conclusion of all the Vedas, he indicates Kṛṣṇa's excellence. Among all the paths, bhakti is the best. Among all worshippers such as jñānīs and others, the devotees are the best. Among all objects of worship such as Brahman, Bhagavān is the best. This is determined by the words of

all the śrutis. Among the forms of Bhagavān, Kṛṣṇa is determined to be the best.

sad-asataḥ paraṁ tvam atha yad eṣv avaśeṣam ṛtam

Distinct from the gross and subtle material manifestations, you are the reality underlying them all. SB 10.87.17

striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyaḥ

The gopīs are attracted to your arms. SB 10.87.23

Understanding this, directly in front of Nārāyaṇa, he does not offer respects to Nārāyaṇa, but to Kṛṣṇa, speaking loudly. Kṛṣṇa has fame which eradicates ignorance since he gives liberation even to demons. "Why do you give up me, your guru, standing in front of you, and instead offer respects to Kṛṣṇa?" Kṛṣṇa has within him attractive avatāra forms like you for extinguishing material suffering. By offering respects to him, I offer respects to you. The present tense (dhatte) is used to show that this is Kṛṣṇa's eternal position. Śruti says:

tasmāt kṛṣṇa evea parā devas taṁ dhārayet taṁ rasayet taṁ bhajet taṁ yajet oṁ tat sat

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord. You should meditate upon him, give him pleasure, worship him and offer sacrifice to him. Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad

Text 87.47

ity ādyam ṛṣim ānamya tac-chiṣyāṁś ca mahātmanaḥ
tato 'gād āśramaṁ sākṣāt pitur dvaipāyanasya me

After saying this, Nārada bowed down to Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, the foremost of sages, and also to his saintly disciples. He then immediately returned directly to the hermitage of my father, Dvaipāyana Vyāsa.

COMMENTARY: He went without delay to the āśrama of Vedavyāsa, where Śukadeva no longer resided. In Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa it is explained that Śukadeva was in the womb of Vyāsa's wife, but remained there for many years by his power of yoga. His father begged him, and asked why he did not come out of the womb. "Why should I come out? Immediately on coming out I will be covered by the Lord's māyā." Hearing this, Vyāsa went

to Dvārakā on his instructions, and brought Kṛṣṇa, Svayam Bhagavān. The Lord said, “You mother is suffering. Why do you not come out?” Hearing this, and requested by the Lord, he said, “If you remove māyā, then I will come out.” This was accepted by the Lord, and Śukadeva came out. He then left Vyāsa’s āśrama and wandered about.

Text 87.48

sabhājito bhagavatā kṛtāsana-parigrahaḥ
tasmai tad varṇayām āsa nārāyaṇa-mukhāc chrutam

Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of the Lord, respectfully greeted Nārada Muni and offered him a seat, which he accepted. Nārada then described to Vyāsa what he had heard from the mouth of Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi.

COMMENTARY: Nārada was welcomed by Vyāsa. Vyāsa is called bhagavān because he was aware of that knowledge like the Kumāras, but still listened. He had bhakti for Nārada as well.

Text 87.49

ity etad varṇitaṁ rājan yan naḥ praśnaḥ kṛtas tvayā
yathā brahmaṇy anirdeśye nīrguṇe ’pi manaś caret

Thus I have replied to the question you asked me, O King, concerning how the mind can have access to the Lord, who is indescribable by material words and devoid of material qualities.

COMMENTARY: The chapter now concludes. The question that you asked me has been answered here. Instead of ity etat sometimes tad etat is seen. “What was the question?” How can the mind approach the Lord by śrutis or by bhakti arising from the Lord’s mercy and the nature of the Lord? How can the śrutis approach the Lord? Tat tu samanvayāt: that the Lord is the sole topic of discussion in the Vedas is confirmed by all scriptures. (Brahma-sūtra 1.1.4) It has already been shown that the Lord is the purport of the Vedas. Śabda-brahma paraṁ brahma mamobhe śāśvatī tanū: the scripture and Brahman are my two eternal forms. (SB 6.16.51) Since scripture and the Lord are one, they have the same śakti. Even without the śrutis, there is a manifestation of very great śakti in Kṛṣṇa, Svayam Bhagavān:

nibhṛta-marun-mano-'kṣa-dṛḍha-yoga-yujo hṛdi yan
munaya upāsate tad arayo 'pi yayuḥ smaraṇāt

Simply by constantly thinking of him, the enemies of the Lord attained the same Supreme Truth whom sages fixed in yoga worship by controlling their breath, mind and senses. SB 10.87.23

Text 87.50

yo 'syotprekṣaka ādi-madhya-nidhane yo 'vyakta-jīveśvaro
yaḥ sṛṣṭvedam anupraviśya ṛṣiṇā cakre puraḥ śāsti tāḥ
yaṁ sampadya jahāty ajām anuśayī suptaḥ kulāyaṁ yathā
taṁ kaivalya-nirasta-yonim abhayaṁ dhyāyed ajasraṁ harim

He is the Lord who eternally watches over this universe, before, during and after its manifestation. He is the master of both the unmanifest material energy and the spirit soul. After sending forth the creation he enters within it, accompanying each living entity. There he creates the material bodies and then remains as their regulator. By surrendering to him, the jīva covered with upādhis can escape the embrace of illusion, just as a dreaming person forgets his own body. One who wants liberation from fear should constantly meditate upon this Lord, who destroys māyā by his pure svarūpa and gives freedom from fear.

COMMENTARY: The Lord is the supreme witness in all three phases of time. He is the antaryāmī of the Kāraṇa Ocean and by his two śaktis, jīva and māyā, he becomes the material cause (upādāna) of creation with consciousness (mahat-tattva). This is called sarga. He is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of the total universe. Entering into it, he becomes the antaryāmī of the total universe (Garbhodakaśāyī). This is his pastime of entering the universe. He makes the individual bodies by means of Brahmā (ṛṣiṇā). He is thus the creator of visarga. He regulates the bodies as antaryāmī of the individual soul (Kṣīrodakaśāyī).

Having shown the Lord's svarūpa-śakti as the instigator of the powers of māyā, Śukadeva now shows him as the destroyer of māyā. Becoming absorbed in the Lord, the jīva covered by upādhis (anuśayī) rejects ignorance, a function of māyā (ajām). This shows the Lord's pastime of liberating jīvas. Having indicated the Lord through the powers of his

svarūpa-śakti, represented by secondary characteristics, Śukadeva then directly indicates the Lord in the last line.

One should meditate on the Lord with his famous svarūpa (harim), who throws māyā far away permanently by his pure svarūpa, the shelter of his pure, powerful śaktis (kaivalyena), simply by being absorbed in the Lord. The Lord who has these qualities, is suitable for bhakti with meditation since he has the purest svarūpa, the purest śaktis, and the highest mercy, which is bestowed on the jīvas for their benefit. By rejecting māyā after describing its powers, by establishing the Lord in the forefront with his pure śaktis, by indicating bhakti as the sādhana represented by meditation, by reliance on the teachings of the Veda, this verse has the same meaning as the ancient prayers of the śrutis. One should also see its details. It also has the same meaning as the first verse of the Bhāgavatam.

The following also has the same meaning.

atra sargo visargaś ca sthānaṁ poṣaṇam ūtayaḥ
manvantareśānukathā nirodho muktir āśrayaḥ

In this Purāṇa there are ten topics: creation, secondary creation, protection, the mercy of the Lord, material activities, the conduct of the Manus, stories of the Lord, destruction of the universe, liberation and the ultimate shelter. SB 2.10.1

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[1] In this chapter Jīva Gosvāmī usually comments on Śrīdhara's commentary on each verse before giving his own commentary. These commentaries on Śrīdhara's commentaries have been omitted to avoid complexity.

[2] A supreme cause must have powers and instruments to act.

[3] Gautama maintains that the effect is non-existent in its cause.

[4] Other forms of the Lord give material benedictions to the demon when they kill them.

[5] Jīva Gosvāmī takes the incident of Jaya and Vijaya being cursed as a pastime on the Vaikuṇṭha planet in the material world.

Chapter Eighty-eight
Lord Śiva Saved from Vṛkāsura

Text 88.1

śrī-rājovāca
devāsura-manuṣyesu ye bhajanty aśivaṁ śivam
prāyas te dhanino bhojā na tu lakṣmyāḥ patiṁ harim

King Parīkṣit said: Those demigods, demons and humans who worship Śiva, a strict renunciant, usually enjoy wealth and sense gratification, while the worshipers of the Supreme Lord, the husband of the goddess of fortune, do not.

Text 88.2

etad veditum icchāmaḥ sandeho 'tra mahān hi naḥ
viruddha-śīlayoḥ prabhvor viruddhā bhajatāṁ gatiḥ

We wish to properly understand this matter, which greatly puzzles us. Indeed, the results attained by the worshipers of these two lords of opposite characters are contrary to what one would expect.

COMMENTARY: I desire to know the reason (etad) for this. The plural is used (we desire) to indicate the crowd of Śaivites who were also in the assembly, and who were glancing about, expressing opposition to what was previously spoken. Śiva and Viṣṇu have opposite characters: Śiva is a renunciant and Viṣṇu is an enjoyer. The possessive (prabhvoḥ) indicates the accusative case. The result of those who worship the two is opposite to the natures of the two since those worshipping Śiva get enjoyment and those worshipping Viṣṇu do not. One sees worshipers of Śiva attaining great wealth immediately. Śiva however is dependent on Lakṣmī, wife of Viṣṇu, for wealth. This is strange. This is not expressed directly however.

Text 88.3

śrī-śuka uvāca
śivaḥ śakti-yutaḥ śaśvat tri-liṅgo guṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ

vaikārikas taijasaś ca tāmasaś cety ahaṁ tridhā

Śrī Śukadeva said: Śiva is always united with his personal energy, the material nature. Manifesting himself in three features in response to the entreaties of nature's three modes, he thus embodies the threefold principle of material ego in goodness, passion and ignorance.

COMMENTARY: Brahmā says in the Second Canto:

sṛjāmi tan-niyukto 'haṁ haro harati tad-vaśaḥ
viśvaṁ puruṣa-rūpeṇa paripāti tri-śakti-dhṛk

I create under his order, and Śiva destroys under his order. Holding his three energies, he protects the universe as the Paramātmā. SB 2.6.32

Śukadeva explains the conclusion of Bhāgavatam, the essence of Vedānta, itihāsas and the Vedas. Let us put aside for now the glories of Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa just discussed. Hear the special qualities of Viṣṇu, an expansion of an expansion of Kṛṣṇa, who for pastimes accepts the supervision of sattva-guṇa. Though it is said that Śiva and Viṣṇu are non-different, Śiva is described as being connected with coverings of the guṇas with lesser powers manifested, similar to a reflection. After establishing this, Śukadeva shows fault in the apparent good qualities and shows good qualities in apparent fault. Finally he indicates the great foolishness of some people who worship Śiva. This topic continues for the rest of the chapter. He shows that Śiva is closely connected with the qualities of upādhis and this is the cause of his specific powers.

Two verses (3-4) are connected. He is eternally endowed with powers (śaśvac-chakti-yutaḥ), but they manifest gradually. This means he is endowed with upādhis in the form of prakṛti when in a state of equilibrium of the guṇas (śakti). When the guṇas become disturbed, he becomes covered with upādhis of the manifested three guṇas (tri-liṅgo guṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ). "We hear that he is covered by upādhis. What is the nature of the upādhis?" Anaṅkāra is of three types. This means he is the controller of the three ahaṅkāras. The chief is tamas and the other two are secondary.

Text 88.4

tato vikārā abhavan ṣoḍaśāmīṣu kañcana
upadhāvan vibhūtīnāṁ sarvāsām aśnute gatim

The sixteen elements have evolved as transformations of that false ego. When a devotee of Śiva worships his manifestation in any one of these elements, the devotee obtains all sorts of corresponding enjoyable opulences.

COMMENTARY: "Let that be. When he is covered by upādhis, what happens?" Then, as representatives of the Lord, sixteen transformations from ahaṅkāra which he controls arise. Worshipping him in the upādhi, as one of the many powers among the transformations (amīṣu), a person attains the result.

Text 88.5

harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ
sa sarva-dṛg upadraṣṭā taṁ bhajan nirguṇo bhavet

Viṣṇu, however, has no connection with the material modes. He is the Supreme Lord, the all-seeing eternal witness, who is transcendental to material nature. One who worships him becomes similarly free from the material modes.

COMMENTARY: He now shows that Viṣṇu is without upādhis and establishes that this is the cause of attaining the highest goals. The word hi indicates either established fact or cause. He is not touched (paraḥ) by the qualities of prakṛti. Therefore he does not have any guṇas. He is not covered by the three guṇas like Śiva. This is because (hi) he is directly the Lord (puruṣaḥ). He is not like a reflection, given powers over a distance. The Lord says vidyāvidye mama tanū viddhy uddhava śarīriṇām: O Uddhava! Understand that vidyā and avidyā are my śaktis. (SB 11.11.3) He uses the word tanū (body). Thus sometimes one hears that Viṣṇu accepts sattva as his śakti. But this is only an appearance, since Viṣṇu assists sattva only. He is directly the Lord. From him arises all knowledge that the Śaivite brāhmaṇas possess (sarva-ḍrk) and he is the witness of everything. Then, worshipping him, one also goes beyond the guṇas. The person enjoys results beyond the guṇas. He is the husband of Lakṣmī and she is a śakti arising from his svarūpa. She is not dependent on Śiva. She surpasses material wealth and powers. It will later be said:

ataḥ śāntir yato 'bhayam
dharmaḥ sākṣād yato jñānaṁ
vairāgyaṁ ca tad-anvitam
aiśvaryaṁ cāṣṭadhā yasmād
yaśaś cātma-malāpaham

From Viṣṇu come peace, fearlessness, dharma; detachment with knowledge; the eightfold powers of mystic yoga; and his glorification, which cleanses the mind of all impurities. (SB 10.89.14-15)

One should thus consider if he has good qualities or faults.

Text 88.6

nivṛtteṣv aśva-medheṣu rājā yuṣmat-pitāmahaḥ
śṛṇvan bhagavato dharmān apṛcchad idam acyutam

Your grandfather, King Yudhiṣṭhira, after completing his Aśvamedha sacrifices, asked Acyuta this very same question while hearing the Lord's explanation of dharma.

COMMENTARY: This is not only his nature, but a subject which should be contemplated. He recites a story concerning this. This topic was explained by the Lord in the assembly consisting of sages of various philosophies. Yudhiṣṭhira asked the Lord the same question which is famous (idam). This shows the weakness of contrary opinions of other scriptures. King Yudhiṣṭhira is your grandfather. Śukadeva thus encourages Parīkṣit by indicating that he is very close to the Lord and that his question is very suitable. Therefore, in respect he uses the word yuṣmat (your). Yudhiṣṭhira was listening to topics of bhagavad-dharma from the Lord. He asked Kṛṣṇa what you have asked. Thus Śukadeva glorifies both of them. He asked the Lord (acyutam), full of all good qualities like affection for his devotees, or full of all powers, or he asked the Lord who always remained in Yudhiṣṭhira's house and did not move (acyutam).

Text 88.7

sa āha bhagavāṁs tasmai prītaḥ śuśrūṣave prabhuḥ
nṛṇāṁ niḥśreyasārthāya yo 'vatīrṇo yadoḥ kule

This question pleased Kṛṣṇa, the king's master, who had descended into the family of Yadu for the purpose of bestowing the highest good on all men. The Lord replied as follows as the King eagerly listened.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa spoke because by his very nature he was pleased and because Yudhiṣṭhira was eager to listen. Or he was pleased because the king was a devotee. "Since the king is an ocean of good qualities such as humility he does not speak about his own excellence." The Lord is independent (prabhuḥ) and has appeared in the Yadu family in order to give benefit to men who are not fortunate since they do not have bhakti. He did not appear on earth to glorify himself. One who does not accept his teachings is unfortunate.

Text 88.8

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
yasyāham anugṛhṇāmi hariṣye tad-dhanaṁ śanaiḥ
tato 'dhanaṁ tyajanty asya svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam

The Supreme Lord said: If I especially favor someone, I gradually deprive him of his wealth. Then the relatives and friends of such a poverty-stricken man abandon him. In this way he suffers one distress after another.

COMMENTARY: Śukadeva then speaks with surprise at the Lord's answer. which indicates an opposite response to devatās and demons. I take away the wealth of that worshipper to whom I am merciful but I am not merciful to a person with material desires. I give wealth to a person to make him a little attracted.

The future tense is used to show intolerance according to Pāṇini 3.3.145. I take away his wealth since I cannot tolerate seeing it. If I take it away suddenly, he will become disturbed, with nothing for protection. Thus I take it away gradually so that he will become indifferent to wealth gradually and become attracted to devotees' association. Then what happens? Gradually his relatives reject him since he has no wealth. He then becomes even more poverty stricken.

Text 88.9

sa yadā vitathodyogo nirviṇṇaḥ syād dhanehayā
mat-paraiḥ kṛta-maitrasya kariṣye mad-anugraham

When he becomes detached from attempts to make money and instead befriends my devotees, I bestow my special mercy (such as giving wealth) upon him.

COMMENTARY: "Then what happens?" He becomes detached (nirviṇṇaḥ). That person then acts beneficially for the devotees who show mercy to the miserable. I then give him my delightful mercy. The future tense is again used to show quickness in giving. (Pāṇini 3.3.131) He gives wealth to those who desire it but not to those who do not desire. Though he gave a kingdom to Prahlāda (who did not desire it), he did this to glorify his devotee since his devotee was unattached to the wealth and he gave it in special circumstances.

Text 88.10

tad brahma paramaṁ sūkṣmaṁ cin-mātraṁ sad anantakam
vijñāyātmatayā dhīraḥ saṁsārāt parimucyate

I give mercy which is indescribable, the greatest, hard to understand, eternal, arising from my spiritual śakti. Understanding this, he is freed from the cycle of material life.

COMMENTARY: His mercy is compared to Brahman. I give mercy whose svarūpa is indescribable (tat) because it is the greatest of all (brahma), which is most excellent (paramam), most difficult to understand (durlabham sūkṣmam), and perfect with no beginning, through an unending succession of devotees, continuous in past and future (sat), because it is a manifestation of the Lord's śakti (cinmātram). The last line starting with vijñāya is additional, not found in traditional Text.

Text 88.11

ato māṁ su-durārādhyaṁ hitvānyān bhajate janaḥ
tatas ta āśu-toṣebhyo labdha-rājya-śriyoddhatāḥ
mattāḥ pramattā vara-dān vismayanty avajānate

Because I am difficult to worship, people generally avoid me and instead worship other devatās, who are quickly satisfied. When people receive

kingly wealth from these deities, they ignore rules, become intoxicated with pride and become neglectful. They dare to offend even the devatās who have bestowed benedictions upon them.

COMMENTARY: The Lord has defined in general terms all truths by showing the result of his mercy. That should be understood in detail. “You give wealth according to the principle of akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā (whether having desires or no desires, worship the Lord) but not to those whom you really show mercy. Then why does an ordinary person worship anyone else to attain wealth?” This person finds it difficult to worship the Lord because he is unsatisfied with the results attained from the Lord—because of ignorance of the real purpose of worshipping the Lord, even after thinking about it thoroughly.

yo gajendraṁ jhaṣa-grastaṁ dhyāyantaṁ caraṇāmbujam
krośantīnāṁ kareṇūnāṁ kṛcchrato ’mocayad drutam
taṁ sukhārādhyam ṛjubhir ananya-śaraṇair nṛbhiḥ
kṛtajñaḥ ko na seveta durārādhyam asādhubhiḥ

What grateful person would not worship the Supreme Lord who quickly rescued the king of the elephants from the material world when he was caught by the crocodile while his wives lamented, as he meditated on the lotus feet of the Lord, and who is willingly worshipped by the sincerely surrendered souls while not worshiped by the crooked? SB 3.19.35-36

Or in this verse the Lord shows the cause is the person’s ignorance. The person gives me up, though I am superior to Brahman (brahma paramam). Brahman is actually difficult to understand, since impersonal Brahman is only my aṁśa (cinmātram) or is my śakti consisting only of consciousness, and is eternal. He gives up my form of the highest bliss and worships other forms.

Worshipping other forms, this person obtains the opposite results. These people become proud (mattāḥ), disregarding all rules (uddhātāḥ), having attained wealth and kingdom from devatās who are easily satisfied but have no discriminating power in giving their benedictions. The worshippers become inattentive (pramattāḥ) and forget those who gave the benedictions. Even if they remember, they offend those devatās.

Text 88.12

śrī-śuka uvāca
śāpa-prasādayor īśā brahma-viṣṇu-śivādayaḥ
sadyaḥ śāpa-prasādo ’ṅga śivo brahmā na cācyutaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others are able to curse or bless one. Śiva and Brahmā are very quick to curse or bestow benedictions, my dear King, but the infallible Supreme Lord is not.

COMMENTARY: The Lord has said the following. The devatās are easily satisfied without considering the consequences of giving. All perfection arises however by the strength of surrender to the Lord: the Lord is not easily pleased but considers very well the consequences in giving, and the Lord always accepts those who take shelter of him. Śukadeva will now tell a story to illustrate this. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, and others like Indra are capable of giving curses or giving benedictions. O King (aṅga)! This is true. The Lord who does not deviate from his qualities (acyutaḥ) does not readily curse and bless.

Text 88.13

atra codāharantīmam itihāsaṁ purātanam
vṛkāsurāya giriśo varaṁ dattvāpa saṅkaṭam

In this connection, an ancient historical account is related concerning how the lord of Kailāsa Mountain was put into danger by offering a choice of benedictions to the demon Vṛka.

COMMENTARY: Instead of purātanam sometimes purāvidaḥ is seen. Those who know Purāṇas tell this story.

Text 88.14

vṛko nāmāsuraḥ putraḥ śakuneḥ pathi nāradam
dṛṣṭvāśu-toṣaṁ papraccha deveṣu triṣu durmatiḥ

The demon named Vṛka, a son of Śakuni, once met Nārada on the road. The wicked fellow asked Nārada which of the three chief gods could be pleased most quickly.

COMMENTARY: Vṛka met Nārada on the road, and without intelligence inquired from him. His question revealed his evil nature on meeting the great devotee and his total ignorance of proper behavior (of offering respects). “Among the three who is most easily pleased?”

Text 88.15

sa āha devaṁ giriśam upādhāvāśu siddhyasi
yo ’lpābhyāṁ guṇa-doṣābhyām āśu tuṣyati kupyati

Nārada told him: Worship Śiva and you will soon achieve success. He quickly becomes pleased by seeing his worshiper’s slightest good qualities—and quickly angered by seeing his slightest fault.

COMMENTARY: Immediately worship Śiva and you will be successful: everything will be clear. He is satisfied with a few good qualities and angered by a few bad qualities.

Text 88.16

daśāsya-bāṇayos tuṣṭaḥ stuvator vandinor iva
aiśvaryam atulaṁ dattvā tata āpa su-saṅkaṭam

He became pleased with ten-headed Rāvaṇa, and also with Bāṇa, when they each chanted his glories like bards in a royal court. Śiva then bestowed unprecedented power upon each of them, but in both cases Śiva fell into great difficulty.

COMMENTARY: “If that is so, I am afraid.” Do not worry. Śiva will not be able to do anything to you once you have obtained the benediction from him. He shows this by examples. Bāṇa and Rāvaṇa chanted like bards because they had strong desires. Because of Bāṇa, Śiva fell into great difficulty. He suffered from fighting with the Lord when Bāṇa requested him to fight on his behalf. The example is taken from a previous kalpa (since the incident with Vṛka happened long before Kṛṣṇa’s birth).

Text 88.17

ity ādiṣṭas tam asura upādhāvat sva-gātrataḥ
kedāra ātma-kravyeṇa juhvāno ’gni-mukhaṁ haram

Thus advised, the demon proceeded to worship Śiva at Kedāranātha by taking pieces of flesh from his own body and offering them as oblations into the sacred fire, which is Śiva's mouth.

COMMENTARY: Having shown the prominence of rajo-guṇa in the two who satisfied Śiva, Śukadeva now shows the tamo-guṇa nature of Vṛka. He sacrificed his flesh into the sacrificial fire, since it is the mouth of all devatās, at Kedāra, Śiva's sacred spot.

Text 88.18–19

devopalabdhim aprāpya nirvedāt saptame 'hani
śiro 'vṛścat sudhitinā tat-tīrtha-klinna-mūrdhajam
tadā mahā-kāruṇiko sa dhūrjaṭir
yathā vayaṁ cāgnir ivotthito 'nalāt
nigṛhya dorbhyāṁ bhujayor nyavārayat
tat-sparśanād bhūya upaskṛtākṛtiḥ

Vṛkāsura became frustrated after failing to obtain a vision of Śiva. Finally, on the seventh day, after dipping his hair into the holy waters at Kedāranātha and leaving it wet, he took up a hatchet and prepared to cut off his head. But at that very moment the supremely merciful Śiva, rose up out of the sacrificial fire, looking like the god of fire himself, and grabbed both arms of the demon to stop him from killing himself, just as an ordinary person would do. By Śiva's touch, Vṛkāsura once again became whole.

COMMENTARY: Not seeing or attaining the presence of Śiva, his object of worship, out of great suffering, using a sword or hatchet, he was about to cut off his head which had completely wet hair from the holy water, since he took bath three times a day or took a special bath in order to cut off his head.

Since Śiva is endowed with all three guṇas, now sattva became prominent. Śiva was most merciful since he became compassionate, even though Vṛka was most wicked. The word vayam simply indicates he acted like ordinary people. This suggests that Śiva gave up his conception of lordship because of his great mercy and acted like an ordinary person.

Text 88.20

tam āha cāṅgālam alaṁ vṛṇīṣva me
yathābhikāmaṁ vitarāmi te varam
prīyeya toyena nṛṇāṁ prapadyatām
aho tvayātmā bhṛśam ardyate vṛthā

Śiva said to him: My friend, please stop, stop! Ask from me whatever you want, and I will bestow that boon upon you. Alas, you have subjected your body to great torment for no reason, since I am pleased with a simple offering of water from those who approach me for shelter.

COMMENTARY: Aṅga indicates affection. There is no purpose in cutting off your head (alam). He repeats alam to show his pain. Instead of yathābhikāmam sometimes yathā nikāma is seen. Ask me a benediction, anything you desire. I will give you that benediction. Aho indicates lamentation.

Text 88.21

devaṁ sa vavre pāpīyān varaṁ bhūta-bhayāvaham
yasya yasya karaṁ śīrṣṇi dhāsye sa mriyatām iti

The benediction sinful Vṛka chose from Śiva would terrify all living beings. Vṛka said, "May death come to whomever I touch upon the head with my hand."

COMMENTARY: Instead of devam sometimes devāt is seen. Devam or devāt indicates a person who should give beneficial benedictions. The cause of the benediction was Vṛka, who was most wicked. Yasya yasya indicates that not once only he wanted to touch the head of a person, but many times. In this way he thought of killing all the devatās.

Text 88.22

tac chrutvā bhagavān rudro durmanā iva bhārata
oṁ iti prahasaṁs tasmai dade 'her amṛtaṁ yathā

Upon hearing this, Rudra seemed somewhat disturbed. Nonetheless, O descendant of Bharata, he vibrated oṁ to signify his assent, granting Vṛka the benediction with a smile, as if it were nectar.

COMMENTARY: Hearing this, Śiva seemed to become aggrieved, but he also knew that the Lord would find some remedy. Thus he smiled in this aggrieved condition, understanding that the Lord was omniscient. He now understood his own foolishness. The benediction was like nectar only in that it was a benediction and not because of its effects. O Bhārata! Just as you who have come in the lineage from Bharata were saved by the Lord, the Lord will save the world from fear in this situation. You should not worry.

Text 88.23

sa tad-vara-parīkṣārthaṁ śambhor mūrdhni kilāsuraḥ
sva-hastaṁ dhātum ārebhe so 'bibhyat sva-kṛtāc chivaḥ

To test Śiva's benediction, the demon then tried to put his hand on Śiva's head. Thus Śiva became frightened of what he himself had done.

COMMENTARY: Kila means "So it is said." Śiva became afraid of the benediction he had given (sva-kṛtāt). Another version has abhibhet. He then turned around and fled. The word śiva indicates that he desired auspiciousness for himself and all living beings.

Text 88.24

tenopasṛṣṭaḥ santrastaḥ parādhāvan sa-vepathuḥ
yāvad antaṁ divo bhūmeḥ kaṣṭhānām udagād udak

As the demon pursued him, Śiva fled swiftly, shaking with terror. He ran as far as the limits of the earth, the sky and the corners of the universe and went north.

COMMENTARY: He fled to the limits of the sky, earth and all directions. Instead of parādhāvan sometimes parādhāvat is seen. He then went north, desiring to go to Śvetadvīpa.

Text 88.25–26

ajānantaḥ prati-vidhiṁ tūṣṇīm āsan sureśvarāḥ
tato vaikuṇṭham agamad bhāsvaraṁ tamasaḥ param
yatra nārāyaṇaḥ sākṣān nyāsināṁ paramo gatiḥ
śāntānāṁ nyasta-daṇḍānāṁ yato nāvartate gataḥ

The great devatās could only remain silent, not knowing how to counteract the benediction. Then Śiva reached the luminous realm of Vaikuṇṭha, beyond all darkness, where the Supreme Nārāyaṇa is manifest. That realm is the destination of renunciants who have attained peace and given up all violence against other creatures. Going there, one never returns.

COMMENTARY: Brahmā and others did not know the remedy. Śiva went to Śvetadvīpa on Bhū-maṇḍala (on the northern side of the milk ocean), which is an avatāra of Mahā-vaikuṇṭha. It is beyond prakṛti (tamasaḥ) and is always self-manifested (bhāsvaram). And like the Lord, this place was without the changes of the material world (param). vikārāvarti ca tathā hi sthitim āha: that abode is changeless. (Brahma-sūtra 4.4.19)

The reason for the purity of the place is described. Nārāyaṇa personally lives there. He is the highest attainment for those who have given up everything for the Lord, or those who are devoid of attraction and repulsion, or have their hearts fixed on the Lord (śāntānām) and who have given up violence. Having gone there, one does not return to saṁsāra. Anāvṛttīḥ śabdād: since the scriptures say this, one does not return. (Brahma-sūtra 4.4.22)

Text 88.27–28

taṁ tathā vyasanaṁ dṛṣṭvā bhagavān vṛjinārdanaḥ
dūrāt pratyudiyād bhūtvā baṭuko yoga-māyayā
mekhalājina-daṇḍākṣais tejasāgnir iva jvalan
abhivādayām āsa ca taṁ kuśa-pāṇir vinīta-vat

The Supreme Lord, who relieves his devotees' distress, had seen from afar that Śiva was in danger. Thus by his mystic yogamāyā potency he assumed the form of a brahmacārī student, with the appropriate belt, deerskin, rod and prayer beads, and came before Vṛka. The Lord's effulgence glowed brilliantly like fire. Holding kuśa grass in his hand, he humbly greeted the demon.

COMMENTARY: The Lord, who knew the whole affair, who possesses powers (bhagavān) and who relieves Śiva and others from suffering (vṛjinārdanaḥ), saw Śiva in danger or full of anger (vyasanam) from far off, from Vaikuṇṭha.

He appeared in front of Vṛka as a brahmacārī by his special bhakti (yogamāyayā) with beads. This was part of the dress of a brahmacārī. He did this to gain the affection and respect of Vṛka. He shone like fire. This indicates his overpowering intelligence. This would also arouse respect in Vṛka. He greeted Vṛka with blessings, introducing himself to him. He greeted him as if humble, but actually it was not so.

Text 88.29

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
śākuneya bhavān vyaktaṁ śrāntaḥ kiṁ dūram āgataḥ
kṣaṇaṁ viśramyatāṁ puṁsa ātmāyaṁ sarva-kāma-dhuk

The Supreme Lord said: My dear son of Śakuni, you appear tired. Why have you come such a great distance? Please rest for a minute. After all, it is one's body that fulfills all one's desires.

COMMENTARY: O son of Śakuni! He addressed him by mentioning his father to gain his trust and pleasure. He shows respect with the word bhavān (you). "I need time to rest." Having the good fortune of a human body (pumsaḥ) fulfills all desires. What to speak of having the body of a great person! Or this body of yours (pumsaḥ), because of having all good qualities, fulfills the desires of everyone.

Text 88.30

yadi naḥ śravaṇāyālaṁ yuṣmad-vyavasitaṁ vibho
bhaṇyatāṁ prāyaśaḥ pumbhir dhṛtaiḥ svārthān samīhate

O mighty one, please tell us what you intend to do, if we are qualified to hear it. Usually one accomplishes his purposes by taking help from others.

COMMENTARY: He speaks to relieve the demon of fatigue. If it is proper (alam) for us (naḥ) to hear, tell what you want. Yuṣmad is used out of respect. Naḥ (plural) is used out of respect to gain his trust. You are able to do anything (vibho)! Instead of prayaśaḥ sometimes puruṣa-vyāghra (tiger among men) is seen. One accomplishes one's purposes through persons under one's control (dhṛtaiḥ) or by others who assist. It is suitable for a great man to have his works done by others.

Text 88.31

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ bhagavatā pṛṣṭo vacasāmṛta-varṣiṇā
gata-klamo ’bravīt tasmai yathā-pūrvam anuṣṭhitam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus, questioned by the Lord in language that poured down upon him like sweet nectar, Vṛka felt relieved of his fatigue. He described to the Lord everything he had done.

COMMENTARY: Asked by the Lord with words which showered like nectar, Vṛka felt relieved. He was pleased with relief from his fatigue. Even though the Lord spoke with other intentions, his innate spiritual qualities did not decrease.

Text 88.32

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
evaṁ cet tarhi tad-vākyaṁ na vayaṁ śraddadhīmahi
yo dakṣa-śāpāt paiśācyaṁ prāptaḥ preta-piśāca-rāṭ

The Supreme Lord said: If this is the case, we cannot believe what Śiva says. Śiva is the master of the Pretas and Piśācas whom Dakṣa cursed to become like a carnivorous hobgoblin.

COMMENTARY: Being a master of the Pretas and Piśācas means that he gives them respect or shares their qualities.

Text 88.33

yadi vas tatra viśrambho dānavendra jagad-gurau
tarhy aṅgāśu sva-śirasi hastaṁ nyasya pratīyatām

O best of the demons, if you have any faith in him because he is the guru of the universe, then without delay put your hand on your head and see what happens.

COMMENTARY: If you have faith in him because you see him as the guru of the universe, put your hand on your head. Instead of āśu sometimes api is seen. Then you will know if what he says is true or what I say is true.

Text 88.34

yady asatyaṁ vacaḥ śambhoḥ kathañcid dānavarṣabha
tadainaṁ jahy asad-vācaṁ na yad vaktānṛtaṁ punaḥ

If the words of Śiva prove untrue in any way, O best of the demons, then kill the liar so he may never lie again.

COMMENTARY: Śambhoḥ means "of he who is happy." Until this time Śiva has been happy. Do this in order to understand if in the future he will not be happy. If his words prove untrue even a little, by a failure of his promise, kill him. Or kill him somehow or other (kathañcit). Instead of tadainam sometimes tad ante is seen. This means "after this." Ante means "now." After killing him he will not longer speak lies since he will not be able to speak. O best of the demons, you can do this!

Text 88.35

itthaṁ bhagavataś citrair vacobhiḥ sa su-peśalaiḥ
bhinna-dhīr vismṛtaḥ śīrṣṇi sva-hastaṁ kumatir nyadhāt

Thus bewildered by the Lord's enchanting, artful words, foolish Vṛka, without realizing what he was doing, placed his hand on his head.

COMMENTARY: His intelligence did not work properly because of the polite words which very skillfully bewildered him like a mantra (citraiḥ), making him lose his memory. Thus he did not remember what to do. The root cause was his foolishness.

Text 88.36

athāpatad bhinna-śirāḥ vrajāhata iva kṣaṇāt
jaya-śabdo namaḥ-śabdaḥ sādhu-śabdo 'bhavad divi

Instantly his head shattered as if struck by a lightning bolt, and the demon fell down dead. From the sky were heard cries of "Victory!" "Obeisances!" and "Well done!"

COMMENTARY: After that, with a moment elapsing, his head cracked. After another moment elapsing, there were sounds from the sky. After a moment, the devatās who were constantly in fear, shouted "Victory" in order to announce his death. This expressed their joy. The devotees said "Obeisances to you" and they said, "Well done!" in astonishment

Text 88.37

mumucuḥ puṣpa-varṣāṇi hate pāpe vṛkāsure
devarṣi-pitṛ-gandharvā mocitaḥ saṅkaṭāc chivaḥ

The celestial sages, Pitṛs and Gandharvas rained down flowers to celebrate the killing of sinful Vṛkāsura. Now Śiva was out of danger.

COMMENTARY: They shouted "Victory" because Śiva was released from danger by the Lord. Or "He was release from danger" shows the conclusion.

Text 88.38–39

muktaṁ giriśam abhyāha bhagavān puruṣottamaḥ
aho deva mahā-deva pāpo 'yaṁ svena pāpmanā
hataḥ ko nu mahatsv īśa jantur vai kṛta-kilbiṣaḥ
kṣemī syāt kim u viśveśe kṛtāgas ko jagad-gurau

The Supreme Lord then addressed Śiva, who was now out of danger: "Just see, O Mahādeva, my lord, how this wicked man has been killed by his own sinful reactions. What living being can hope for good fortune if he offends exalted saints, what to speak of offending the lord and guru of the universe?"

COMMENTARY: The Lord went out of Vaikuṇṭha to meet Śiva. He spoke to Śiva in this way because he was Bhagavān. He has qualities like humility more than all other men (puruṣottamaḥ). It is astonishing (aho)! O Śiva, worshipped by the universe (deva) since you are the greatest of all (mahā-deva)! He was actually not killed by his sins, but by the Lord. O Śiva you are capable of killing him (īśa)! You did not kill him since he had worshipped you. Kilbiṣaḥ means offense.

Text 88.40

ya evam avyākṛta-śakty-udanvataḥ
parasya sākṣāt paramātmano hareḥ
giritra-mokṣaṁ kathayec chṛṇoti vā
vimucyate saṁsṛtibhis tathāribhiḥ

The Lord is the directly the Supreme Lord, the Supreme Soul and unlimited ocean of inconceivable energies. Anyone who recites or hears

this pastime of his saving Śiva will be freed from all enemies and the repetition of birth and death.

COMMENTARY: It is not unreasonable to glorify the Lord directly because of his freeing Śiva from danger, because even just by hearing this story all people will be delivered from all sufferings of saṁsāra. This happens for anyone (yaḥ). Qualification is not necessary. The Lord is an ocean, a shelter of all things coming together (udanvataḥ), having rivers of śaktis related to his svarūpa-śakti, which are beyond the material world (avyākṛta). He is directly the Supreme Lord (sākṣāt parasya), not like Śiva who as an expansion having upādhis, since the Lord is the cause of all śaktis as the root form (paramātmanaḥ). Therefore, he is endowed with the power to attract everyone (hareḥ). The person without material desires will be freed from saṁsāra. He will also be free of enemies. This is stated to attract materialistic people. Or, how will he be free of repeated births? He will be freed from repeated births, along with the six enemies (kāma, krodha, lobha, harṣa, māna and mada).

Chapter Eight-nine
Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna Retrieve a Brāhmaṇa's Sons

Text 89.1

śrī-śuka uvāca
sarasvatyās taṭe rājann ṛṣayaḥ satram āsata
vitarkaḥ samabhūt teṣāṁ triṣv adhīśeṣu ko mahān

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, O King, as a group of sages were performing a Vedic sacrifice on the banks of the Sarasvatī River, a controversy arose among them as to which of the three chief deities is supreme.

COMMENTARY: Angered because Śiva with upādhis was easily pleased, while considering how the Lord gave things which bring about the highest, purest goal because of his pure svarūpa, Śukadeva now shows Viṣṇu's superiority to Brahmā. He speaks of Viṣṇu's superiority over Śiva and Brahmā and Viṣṇu's compassion and humility, though Viṣṇu was insulted. The sages were performing a sacrifice. The present tense is used to show that it continued until the present time. Because they were absorbed in the actions of the sacrifice, they did not notice the passing of time. They wondered, based on scripture (sam-abhūt), "Who is supreme among the three?"

Text 89.2

tasya jijñāsayā te vai bhṛguṁ brahma-sutaṁ nṛpa
taj-jñaptyai preṣayām āsuḥ so 'bhyagād brahmaṇaḥ sabhām

Eager to resolve this question, O King, the sages sent Brahmā's son Bhṛgu to find the answer. First he went to his father's court.

COMMENTARY: Among sages, I am Bhṛgu. (BG 10.25) He was of great status and thus qualified for the job. Since he identified himself as Brahmā's son, he would not be hesitant in front of his father. Brahmā was affectionate to him and Śiva took him as a brother and Viṣṇu was affection to brāhmaṇas.

He went to Brahmā's assembly to face him fearlessly (abhi-agāt) in order to understand Brahmā's greatness.

Text 89.3

na tasmai prahvaṇaṁ stotraṁ cakre sattva-parīkṣayā
tasmai cukrodha bhagavān prajvalan svena tejasā

To test how well Brahmā was situated in goodness, Bhṛgu failed to bow down to him or glorify him with prayers. Brahmā became angry with him, inflamed with fury by his passion.

COMMENTARY: Since Bhṛgu did not offer respects or glorify Brahmā in order to test his excellence, Brahmā, worshipped by all because he created the universe (bhagavān), became angry at him, blazing prominently with his extraordinary power, so that he could not even speak.

Text 89.4

sa ātmany utthitam manyum ātmajāyātmanā prabhuḥ
aśīśamad yathā vahniṁ sva-yonyā vāriṇātma-bhūḥ

Though anger toward his son was now rising within his heart, Brahmā was able to subdue it because it was his son, in the same way that fire is extinguished by its own product, water.

COMMENTARY: He controlled the anger in his mind (ātmani) without having to accept apologies (ātmanā) since he was capable of reflection (prabhuḥ), since he was born from Viṣṇu (ātma-bhūḥ). He thought as follows. "As fire is extinguished by its product water, my anger is extinguished because he is my son who has arisen from me."

Text 89.5

tataḥ kailāsam agamat sa taṁ devo maheśvaraḥ
parirabdhuṁ samārebha utthāya bhrātaraṁ mudā

Bhṛgu then went to Mount Kailāsa. There Śiva stood up and happily came forward to embrace his brother.

COMMENTARY: Brahmā showed rajas, which blocked sattva. Śiva first showed sattva which blocked tamas and then showed tamas which blocked sattva. Śiva was worthy of worship by the universe (devaḥ) and was the

lord of everyone's ahaṅkāra (maheśvaraḥ). In joy he rose to embrace Bhṛgu by spreading his arms, since he accepted Bhṛgu as his brother.

Text 89.6–7

naicchat tvam asy utpatha-ga iti devaś cukopa ha
śūlam udyamya taṁ hantum ārebhe tigma-locanaḥ
patitvā pādayor devī sāntvayām āsa taṁ girā
atho jagāma vaikuṇṭhaṁ yatra devo janārdanaḥ

But Bhṛgu refused his embrace, telling him, "You are a deviant heretic." At this Śiva became angry, and his eyes burned ferociously. He raised his trident and was about to kill Bhṛgu when Goddess Devī fell at his feet and spoke some words to pacify him. Bhṛgu then left that place and went to Vaikuṇṭha, where Janārdana resides.

COMMENTARY: Bhṛgu did not desire to embrace him because Śiva followed an unauthorized path, smearing ashes from the graveyard on his body. Śiva became angry. His eyes became hot, able to spread fire. His wife pacified him with logical words. He then went to Vaikuṇṭha in the material world, made by the son of Vikuṇṭhā. This was a special Viṣṇu-loka. Verse 12 mentions that Vaikuṇṭha resided there.

patnī vikuṇṭhā śubhrasya vaikuṇṭhaiḥ sura-sattamaiḥ
tayoḥ sva-kalayā jajñe vaikuṇṭho bhagavān svayam
vaikuṇṭhaḥ kalpito yena loko loka-namaskṛtaḥ
ramayā prārthyamānena devyā tat-priya-kāmyayā

From the combination of Śubhra and his wife, Vikuṇṭhā, there appeared the Supreme Lord, Vaikuṇṭha, along with demigods who were his personal plenary expansions. Just to please the goddess of fortune, the Supreme Lord, Vaikuṇṭha, at her request, created another Vaikuṇṭha planet, which is worshiped by everyone. SB 8.5.4-5

Text 89.8–9

śayānaṁ śriya utsaṅge padā vakṣasy atāḍayat
tata utthāya bhagavān saha lakṣmyā satāṁ gatiḥ
sva-talpād avaruhyātha nanāma śirasā munim

āha te svāgataṁ brahman niṣīdātrāsane kṣaṇam
ajānatām āgatān vaḥ kṣantum arhatha naḥ prabho

There he went up to the Supreme Lord, who was lying with his head on the lap of his consort, and kicked him on the chest. The Lord then rose, along with Lakṣmī, as a sign of respect. Coming down from his bedstead, that shelter of all qualities bowed his head to the floor before the sage and told him, "Welcome, brāhmaṇa. Please sit in this seat and rest awhile. Kindly forgive us, dear master, for not noticing your arrival."

COMMENTARY: Because Viṣṇu was lying with his head on Lakṣmī's lap and both of them were absorbed in prema, they did not see Bhṛgu arrive. Thus, kicking Viṣṇu especially at this time was completely improper. Because of the Lord's qualities manifested at this time, later Bhṛgu became a Vaiṣṇava. He was able to go to Vaikuṇṭha because the Lord desired to show his qualities, to show mercy to the people in general. After being kicked (tataḥ) Viṣṇu saw him. Immediately, with Śrī, he stood up from his bed. The word sva indicates that his bed was as powerful as the Lord himself. Still he rose quickly from that bed, disregarding it. He did this because he is the shelter of good qualities (satām gatiḥ), endowed with all good qualities (bhagavān) or because he was directly the Supreme Lord.

Have you come in comfort (svāgatam)? Or, your coming is most auspicious. O form of the devatās, worthy of worship (brahman)! Please sit in this seat. This was the Lord's own bed, or a special seat for brāhmaṇas, or a seat which the Lord personally brought. "I cannot accept the seat since I have not been respected by you. You should have come out to meet me." But we did not know about your (vaḥ) coming. Plural number (vaḥ) is used to show respect. Please forgive us (naḥ). Viṣṇu uses the plural for himself to indicate Lakṣmī and others as well.

Text 89.10–11

punīhi saha-lokaṁ māṁ loka-pālāṁś ca mad-gatān
pādodakena bhavatas tīrthānāṁ tīrtha-kāriṇā
adyāhaṁ bhagavaḻ lakṣmyā āsam ekānta-bhājanam
vatsyaty urasi me bhūtir bhavat-pāda-hatāṁhasaḥ

“Please purify me, my realm and the realms of the universal rulers devoted to me by giving us the water that has washed your feet. This holy water is what makes all places of pilgrimage sacred. Today, my lord, I have become the exclusive shelter of the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī; she will consent to reside on my chest because your foot has rid it of sins.”

COMMENTARY: With the aim of getting Bhṛgu to forgive him so that the Lord could be peaceful, Viṣṇu offered excessive praise. Purify me, Vaikuṇṭha, along with the fourteen planetary systems (saha lokam) as well as Brahmā, Śiva and others and others present in me (mad-gatān). This means the living entities are within his belly (as the universal form) or that they are all his aṁśas. Sit down for a moment. I will wash your feet and put the water on my head. Instead of bhavataḥ sometimes bhagavān (O sage worthy of worship) is seen. “But I have committed a great offense and am now full of regret. How can I sit here in embarrassment?” But you have been most merciful to me by kicking me on the chest. I have now become the supreme shelter of Lakṣmī. You are capable of doing this. O sage endowed with all powers (bhagavān)! Now Lakṣmī will reside on my chest always since it has been purified by your foot. This means that up to that time she did not reside on the chest of the son of Vikuṇṭha.

Text 89.12

śrī-śuka uvāca
evaṁ bruvāṇe vaikuṇṭhe bhṛgus tan-mandrayā girā
nirvṛtas tarpitas tūṣṇīṁ bhakty-utkaṇṭho ’śru-locanaḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Bhṛgu felt satisfied and delighted to hear the solemn words spoken by Vaikuṇṭha. Overwhelmed with devotional ecstasy, he remained silent, his eyes brimming with tears.

COMMENTARY: On hearing the words of the son of Vikuṇṭha, Bhṛgu was at ease in his mind since he was pleased.

Tears choked his voice because of his prema mixed with reverence. Tears came to his eyes.

Text 89.13

punaś ca satram āvrajya munīnāṁ brahma-vādinām
svānubhūtam aśeṣeṇa rājan bhṛgur avarṇayat

O King, Bhṛgu then returned to the assembly of the wise Vedic authorities and described his entire experience to them.

COMMENTARY: The sages had a long meeting (satram) in which they repeated the Vedas for contemplation, but not to understand its conclusions.

Text 89.14–17

tan niśamyātha munayo vismitā mukta-saṁśayāḥ
bhūyāṁsaṁ śraddadhur viṣṇuṁ yataḥ śāntir yato 'bhayam
dharmaḥ sākṣād yato jñānaṁ vairāgyaṁ ca tad-anvitam
aiśvaryaṁ cāṣṭadhā yasmād yaśaś cātma-malāpaham
munīnāṁ nyasta-daṇḍānāṁ śāntānāṁ sama-cetasām
akiñcanānāṁ sādhūnāṁ yam āhuḥ paramāṁ gatim
sattvaṁ yasya priyā mūrtir brāhmaṇās tv iṣṭa-devatāḥ
bhajanty anāśiṣaḥ śāntā yaṁ vā nipuṇa-buddhayaḥ

Amazed upon hearing Bhṛgu's account, the sages were freed from all doubts and became convinced that Viṣṇu is the greatest Lord. From him come peace; fearlessness; bhakti; along with detachment and realization; the eightfold powers of mystic yoga; and his glorification, which cleanses the mind of all impurities. He is known as the supreme destination for those who contemplate, who give up violence, who become satisfied, who see everything else with disinterest, who possess nothing except they Lord, and who give up all cheating dharmas. Brāhmaṇas who are worshipped like deities, who have good intelligence, who are devoid of attraction and repulsion and thus peaceful, worship that Lord who is the merciful basis of material sattva.

COMMENTARY: The sages became convinced that Viṣṇu (bhūyāṁsam) was the greatest. He was not just great. That was proper. They explain the reason in the next verses until the end of verse 18. Because of him, others, like Bhṛgu, become peaceful, without disturbance. What to speak of the Lord's own peacefulness. Disturbance can be seen in a small lamp, but not in the large sun. Thus the Lord's greatness can be inferred. From him

comes fearlessness for those who approach him, even with the offense, as in the case of Bhṛgu.

Then various great spiritual qualities of the Lord are shown in three verses by showing how those qualities are attained even in others who contact him. What then to speak of his qualities. From him directly comes bhagavad-dharma. The word sākṣāt should be attached to each of the later phrases. By that dharma, one becomes directly endowed with the realization of the Lord (jñānam) and vairagya (detachment). The three items appear simultaneously:

ity acyutāṅghriṁ bhajato 'nuvṛttyā
bhaktir viraktir bhagavat-prabodhaḥ
bhavanti vai bhāgavatasya rājaṁs
tataḥ parāṁ śāntim upaiti sākṣāt

O King! The devotee who worships the lotus feet of the infallible Lord with constant endeavor achieves unflinching devotion, detachment and experience of the Lord. He achieves supreme happiness. SB 11.2.43

This realization is filled with prema, not dry knowledge. Instead of tad-anvitam sometime catur-vidham is seen. From the Lord come the eight mystic powers, which are spiritual, though the devotee does not ask for these.

atho vibhūtiṁ mama māyāvinas tām
aiśvaryam aṣṭāṅgam anupravṛttam
śriyaṁ bhāgavatīṁ vāspṛhayanti bhadrāṁ
parasya me te 'śnuvate tu loke

The devotees certainly do not desire attainment of the happiness of the material universe piled up by māyā, the powers of yoga-siddhis following bhakti, the auspicious rewards of residing in Vaikuṇṭha, or the bliss of Brahman. But the devotees attain the planet of me, the Supreme Lord. SB 3.25.37

These qualities should be understood to be eternal, fixed in the Lord. All the contaminations of everyone's minds, such as unsteadiness, are destroyed by the Lord through processes like hearing.

Because these mystic powers are not a disturbance, the Lord is the goal of those who are devoted to contemplation (munīnām), and consequently they give up all violence towards living beings (nyasta-daṇḍānām) in order to meditate on the Lord. By meditating on the Lord they become satisfied (śāntānām). By desiring only the Lord, they see everything else like Svarga and liberation equally with disinterest (sama-cetasām). Thus they have no sense of possession except for the Lord (akiñcanānām). And thus they give up all cheating dharmas (sādhūnām).

Though endowed with spiritual, śuddha-sattva qualities, he gives mercy to material sattva. This particular quality of the Lord is shown. Brāhmaṇas who are worshipped like deities, who have good intelligence, who are devoid of attraction and repulsion and thus peaceful, worship the Lord who is the merciful abode of sattva.

Text 89.18

tri-vidhākṛtayas tasya rākṣasā asurāḥ surāḥ
guṇinyā māyayā sṛṣṭāḥ sattvaṁ tat tīrtha-sādhanam

The Lord expands into three kinds of manifest beings—the Rākṣasas, the demons and the demigods—all of whom are created by the Lord's material energy and conditioned by her modes. But among these three modes, it is the mode of goodness which is the means of attaining life's final success.

COMMENTARY: He is the abode of material sattva. Is he abode of anything else? He takes three forms. Rākṣasas are in tamas, asuras are in rajas and devatās are in sattva. Others are also included. "Why is the Lord attracted to material sattva if he is unattached to māyā?" Sattva is the door (sādhanam) to understanding scriptures which propound bhakti (tīrtha). Sattva is related to bhakti by creating a favorable step towards it.

Text 89.19

śrī-śuka uvāca
itthaṁ sārasvatā viprā nṛṇām saṁśaya-nuttaye
puruṣasya padāmbhoja-sevayā tad-gatiṁ gatāḥ

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The learned brāhmaṇas living along the river Sarasvatī came to this conclusion in order to dispel the doubts of all people. Thereafter they rendered devotional service to the Supreme Lord's lotus feet and realized him.

COMMENTARY: After describing what the sages said, Śukadeva now speaks. Having determined this (ittham), for dispelling doubts of the people, and verifying this by scripture, by serving his feet, they realized him. Or they realized the Lord in order to dispel people's doubts.

Text 89.20

śrī-sūta uvāca
ity etan muni-tanayāsya-padma-gandha
pīyūṣaṁ bhava-bhaya-bhit parasya puṁsaḥ
su-ślokaṁ śravaṇa-puṭaiḥ pibaty abhīkṣṇam
pāntho 'dhva-bhramaṇa-pariśramaṁ jahāti

Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī said: Thus, did this fragrant nectar flow from the lotus mouth of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the son of the sage Vyāsadeva. This wonderful glorification of the Supreme Person destroys all fear of material existence. A traveler who constantly drinks this nectar through his earholes will forget the fatigue brought on by wandering along the paths of worldly life.

COMMENTARY:

Being highly satisfied with the teachings of his guru which take away great doubts of even those who know scriptures, Sūta praises this knowledge. By this he creates a great faith in others. This topic (etat) which were just spoken (about the supremacy of Viṣṇu over Śiva), full of prema, is like fragrant nectar from the lotus mouth of the son of Vyāsa. He mentions both Vyāsa and Śukadeva out of intense bhakti. By its nature it is the highest goal for humanity. As well the topic destroys the fear of old age and death. Its glory is splendid, or its stories are splendid. Travelers in saṁsāra develop many ears to drink this nectar and give up the fatigue of wandering on the road, forgetting all ancient sufferings by the bliss of this knowledge. They then give up wandering.

Since Bhāgavatam clearly shows the supreme position of Viṣṇu, the faults proclaimed in other scriptures if one sees difference between Viṣṇu and Śiva are the opinions of non-Vaiṣṇavas, since those scriptures are not for Vaiṣṇavas. The opposite is stated in Vaiṣṇava scriptures.

yas tu nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ
samatvenaiva vīkṣeta sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam

One who considers Nārāyaṇa on a level with great devatās like Brahmā and Śiva is immediately listed among nonbelievers.

In Viṣṇudharmottara there is the story of Viṣvaksena, a devotee brāhmaṇa. While wandering the earth he met by good fortune a head of a village.

deva-karmaṇy aśaktir me tāta pujaya saṅgakaram
devatāyanataṁ gatvā yatra tāta pratiṣṭhitam
liṅgam asti susreśasya mahādevasya nirmalam
evam uktaḥ praty uvāca vayam ekāntinaḥ śrutāḥ
pūjayāmaś ca naivānyaṁ tasmāt tvaṁ gaccha māciram

The village leader said, “I cannot perform worship. You should worship Śiva. Go to his temple where there is a pure liṅga of Śiva installed.” When he said this, the brāhmaṇa said, “I am a devoted brāhmaṇa. I do not worship anyone except Viṣṇu. Therefore, you should go to that temple without delay.”

The son of the village leader was about to cut off the head of Viṣvaksena. Not desiring to die by his hand, Viṣvaksena then began to consider. “Let it be. I will go.” Going to the liṅga, he offered flowers while saying “Respects to Narasiṁha.” Hearing this, the son again wanted to cut off his head. Nṛsiṁha burst out of the liṅga and cut off the heads of the village leader’s son and his followers.

In Skanda Purāṇa, Śiva says śiva-śāstreṣu tad grāhyaṁ bhagavat-śāstra-yogi yat: one should accept from the scriptures dealing with Śiva what does not contradict the scriptures dealing with Bhagavān. Hari-vaṁśa says:

harir ekaḥ sadā dhyeyo bhavadbhiḥ sattva-saṁśrayaiḥ
viṣnum-mantraṁ sadā viprāḥ paṭhadhvaṁ dhyāta keśavam

Only Viṣṇu should be the object of meditation for you who have taken shelter of sattva. The brāhmaṇas should recite Viṣṇu mantras and meditate

on Viṣṇu.

But it says in Bhāgavatam:

trayāṇām eka-bhāvānāṁ yo na paśyati vai bhidām
sarva-bhūtātmanāṁ brahman sa śāntim adhigacchati

O Dakṣa! The person who does not see difference between the three of us, the souls of all beings, who have one nature, attains peace. SB 4.7.54

However, compared to Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva are not independent. Brahmā says:

sṛjāmi tan-niyukto 'haṁ haro harati tad-vaśaḥ
viśvaṁ puruṣa-rūpeṇa paripāti tri-śakti-dhṛk

I create under his order, and Śiva destroys under his order. Holding his three energies, he protects the universe as the Paramātmā. SB 2.6.32

brahmā bhavo 'ham api yasya kalāḥ kalāyāḥ

Great devatās like Brahmā and Śiva, and even the goddess of fortune and I, are simply parts of his expansions. SB 10.68.37

yac-chauca-niḥsṛta-sarit-pravarodakena
tīrthena mūrdhny adhikṛtena śivaḥ śivo 'bhūt
dhyātur manaḥ-śamala-śaila-nisṛṣṭa-vajraṁ
dhyāyec ciraṁ bhagavataś caraṇāravindam

One should meditate continually upon the Lord's lotus feet from which the Gaṅgā flows and gives extra blessings to Śiva on his head, and whose thunderbolt is released upon mountains of sin in the meditator's mind. SB 3.28.22

Padma Purāṇa says:

śivasya śrī-viṣṇor ya iha guṇa-nāmādi-sakalaṁ
dhiyā bhinnaṁ paśyet sa khalu hari-nāmāhita-karaḥ

The person who sees the names and qualities of Śiva to be independent of Viṣṇu's qualities and names does injury to the name of Viṣṇu.

The word śrī with Viṣṇu indicates that he is endowed with all śaktis and pervades everywhere. Therefore his name is similar. One who sees Śiva's names and qualities as independent does injury to Viṣṇu's names. Śiva speaks to Mārkaṇḍeya:

na te mayy acyute 'je ca bhidām aṇv api cakṣate
nātmanaś ca janasyāpi tad yuṣmān vayam īmahi

These devotees do not differentiate between Viṣṇu, Brahmā and me, nor do they differentiate between themselves and other living beings. But we worship you more than such persons. SB 12.10.22

Śiva says:

atha bhāgavatā yūyaṁ priyāḥ stha bhagavān yathā
na mad bhāgavatānāṁ ca preyān anyo 'sti karhicit

You devotees are dear to me just as the Supreme lord is dear to me. The devotees hold me dear, just as they hold the Lord dear. SB 4.24.30

naivecchaty āśiṣaḥ kvāpi brahmarṣir mokṣam apy uta
bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati labdhavān puruṣe 'vyaye

Surely this saintly brāhmaṇa does not desire any benediction, not even liberation itself, for he has attained pure devotional service unto the inexhaustible Lord. SB 12.10.6

Śiva speaks with great devotion. In order to show the greatness of the devotee in samādhi to Pārvatī, Śiva entered Mārkaṇḍeya's heart. Mārkaṇḍeya then came out of the trance.

bibhrāṇaṁ sahasā bhātaṁ vicakṣya hṛdi vismitaḥ
kim idaṁ kuta eveti samādher virato muniḥ

Astonished, the sage came out of his trance and thought, "Who is this, and where has he come from?" SB 12.10.13

It cannot be otherwise. All excellence resides in Viṣṇu eternally. Śiva is worshipped by the Vaiṣṇavas as the Lord's devotee, like Viṣvaksena and Mārkaṇḍeya. At the end of the Twelfth Canto Śiva is regarded as the best Vaiṣṇava. Vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ: Śiva is a great devotee. Ādi-varāha Purāṇa says:

janmāntara sahasreṇa samāraḍhya vṛṣadhvajam
vaiṣṇavataṁ labhed dhīmān sarvapāpakṣaye sati

Worshipping Śiva for thousands of births, the intelligent person becomes a Vaiṣṇava after destroying all sins.

All criticism should be avoided.

yo māṁ samarthayen nityam ekāntaṁ bhāvam āshthitaḥ
vinindan devam īśānaṁ sa yāti narakam dhruvam

One who is able to be situated in pure love for me and criticizes Śiva goes to hell for certain.

Māha-lakṣmī says:

yaṁ kāmaye tam ugraṁ kṛṇomi taṁ brahmāṇaṁ tam ṛṣim taṁ sumedhām samayo niścalarantaḥ

I make the man whom I love exceedingly fierce (Śiva); I make him a wise man, a sage, a Brahmā. Time does not pass there. Ṛg Veda 10.125.5

Taittirīya Upaniṣad say:

madhye vāmanam āsīnaṁ viśvedevā upāsate

All the devatās meditate on Vāmana seated in the middle.

rudrajāpaka-śatam ekam ekena atharvashiraḥ śikhādhyāpakena tat-
samam atharvaśiraḥ-
śikhādhyāpaka-śatam ekam ekena mantrarājādhyāpakena tat-sama

One chanter of Śiva-mantras is equal to a hundred sannyāsīs. One teacher of the Atharvāṅgirasa-śākha is equal to a hundred chanters of Śiva-mantras. One teacher of the regal Nṛsiṁha-mantra is equal to a hundred teachers of the Atharvāṅgirasa-śākhā. Nṛsimḥa-tāpanī Upaniṣad

In Bhagavata, Paramātma and Bhakti Sandarbhas this has been elaborately described.

Text 89.21

śrī-śuka uvāca
ekadā dvāravatyāṁ tu vipra-patnyāḥ kumārakaḥ
jāta-mātro bhuvaṁ spṛṣṭvā mamāra kila bhārata

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, in Dvārakā, a brāhmaṇa's wife gave birth to a son, but the newborn infant died as soon as he touched the ground, O Bhārata.

COMMENTARY: The story just told shows Viṣṇu's excellence, but this culminates in Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa. Śukadeva now tells a story to show speficially the supreme position of Kṛṣṇa. The word tu makes a distinction.

Kila means it is well known everywhere. This means one should not think "This is impossible to happen in the city of the Lord."

Text 89.22

vipro gṛhītvā mṛtakaṁ rāja-dvāry upadhāya saḥ
idaṁ provāca vilapann āturo dīna-mānasaḥ

The brāhmaṇa took the corpse and placed it at the door of King Ugrasena's court. Then, lamenting because of great grief, feeling misery, he spoke the following.

COMMENTARY: The brāhmaṇa, husband of the woman who had given birth, wailed in misery (provāca) at the gate of King Ugrasena's palace. He lamented because he was overcome with grief (āturaḥ) and was thus feeling miserable in his heart (dīna-manasaḥ).

Text 89.23

brahma-dviṣaḥ śaṭha-dhiyo lubdhasya viṣayātmanaḥ
kṣatra-bandhoḥ karma-doṣāt pañcatvaṁ me gato 'rbhakaḥ

[The brāhmaṇa said:] This duplicitous, greedy enemy of brāhmaṇas, this unqualified ruler addicted to sense pleasure, has caused my son's death by some discrepancies in the execution of his karmas.

COMMENTARY: You hate the Vedas or brāhmaṇas since you are indifferent to the death of a brāhmaṇa. The reason is that you have distorted judgment, because your mind is attracted to material pleasures. The reason for this is that you are the lowest of kṣatriyas.

Text 89.24

hiṁsā-vihāraṁ nṛpatiṁduḥśīlam ajitendriyam
prajā bhajantyaḥ sīdanti daridrā nitya-duḥkhitāḥ

Citizens serving such a king who takes pleasure in violence because of bad character caused by uncontrolled senses are doomed to suffer poverty and constant misery.

COMMENTARY: He gives scriptural evidence for the death of his son because of the king's negligence. The king takes pleasure in violence because of his wicked nature, which is caused by uncontrolled senses. Those who serve

such a king suffer. “How do they suffer?” They become poor and always feel pain from various lamentations.

Text 89.25

evaṁ dvitīyaṁ viprarṣis tṛtīyaṁ tv evam eva ca
visṛjya sa nṛpa-dvāri tāṁ gāthāṁ samagāyata

The wise brāhmaṇa suffered the same tragedy with his second and third child. Each time, he left the body of his dead son at the king’s door and sang the same song of lamentation.

COMMENTARY: The word ca indicates that were a total of nine deaths. Since he was a sage among brāhmaṇas, he was faultless, fully qualified. The brāhmaṇa made the same statement: that the king hated brāhmaṇas, since he took pleasure in violence, etc.

Text 89.26–27

tām arjuna upaśrutya karhicit keśavāntike
parete navame bale brāhmaṇaṁ samabhāṣata
kiṁ svid brahmaṁs tvan-nivāse iha nāsti dhanur-dharaḥ
rājanya-bandhur ete vai brāhmaṇāḥ satram āsate

When the ninth child died, Arjuna, who was near Keśava, happened to hear through others the brāhmaṇa’s complaint. Thus Arjuna addressed the brāhmaṇa: “What is the matter, my dear brāhmaṇa? Isn’t there some lowly member of the royal order here who can at least stand before your house with a bow in his hand? These kṣatriyas are behaving as if they were brāhmaṇas idly engaged in fire sacrifices.

COMMENTARY: Hearing through others about his complaint while he was with Kṛṣṇa, he came to the brāhmaṇa and spoke loudly to console him. Arjuna addressed him with respect, “O brāhmaṇa!” in order to pacify him, gain his trust, and to indicate the fault of others present who were indifferent to the brāhmaṇa. “Can a lowly kṣatriya not protect you, what to speak of a real kṣatriya?” Vai indicates similarity.

Text 89.28

dhana-dārātmajāpṛktā yatra śocanti brāhmaṇāḥ
te vai rājanya-veṣeṇa naṭā jīvanty asum-bharāḥ

"The rulers of a kingdom in which brāhmaṇas lament over lost wealth, wives and children are merely imposters playing the role of kings just to earn their livelihood.

COMMENTARY: He supposes the worst situation. Wealth, wives and children are in order of importance, protection of children being the most important.

Text 89.29

ahaṁ prajāḥ vāṁ bhagavan rakṣiṣye dīnayor iha
anistīrṇa-pratijño 'gniṁ pravekṣye hata-kalmaṣaḥ

"My lord, I will protect the progeny of you and your wife, who are in such distress. And if I fail to keep this promise, I will enter fire to atone for my sin."

COMMENTARY: He speaks to the brāhmaṇa and his wife. Out of great lamentation the wife had also come. Or she came together with him to show their suffering to others. I will enter fire to become free of the sin of hearing a brāhmaṇa lament. Or I will enter fire because of not being free of sin (ahata-kalmaṣaḥ). Or, the sentence should be completed as follows. Hata-kalmaṣaḥ syām: I will thus be freed of sin.

Text 89.30–31

śrī-brāhmaṇa uvāca
saṅkarṣaṇo vāsudevaḥ pradyumno dhanvināṁ varaḥ
aniruddho 'prati-ratho na trātuṁ śaknuvanti yat
tat kathaṁ nu bhavān karma duṣkaraṁ jagad-īśvaraiḥ
tvaṁ cikīrṣasi bāliśyāt tan na śraddadhmahe vayam

The brāhmaṇa said: Neither Saṅkarṣaṇa; Vāsudeva; Pradyumna, the best of bowmen; nor the unequaled warrior Aniruddha could save my sons. Then why do you naively attempt a feat that the almighty rulers of the universe could not perform? We cannot take you seriously.

COMMENTARY: By giving descriptive phrases along with Pradyumna and Aniruddha, he indicates that all four were similar in strength. That they

were not enthusiastic to destroy obstacles in protecting my children is my bad karma created by the rulers of the universe. How can you protect the children? Therefore you are attempting this out of foolishness. I do not believe you.

Text 89.32

śrī-arjuna uvāca
nāhaṁ saṅkarṣaṇo brahman na kṛṣṇaḥ kārṣṇir eva ca
ahaṁ vā arjuno nāma gāṇḍīvaṁ yasya vai dhanuḥ

Arjuna said: I am neither Saṅkarṣaṇa, O brāhmaṇa, nor Kṛṣṇa, nor even Kṛṣṇa's son. Rather, I am Arjuna, wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow.

COMMENTARY: I am not one who was pulled from the womb, nor am I the black one. The word na is repeated to make emphatic statements. I am not Pradyumna. With extreme disrespect, he does not even mention Aniruddha's name.

Text 89.33

māvamaṁsthā mama brahman vīryaṁ tryambaka-toṣaṇam
mṛtyuṁ vijitya pradhane āneṣye te prajāḥ prabho

Do not minimize my ability, which was good enough to satisfy Śiva, O brāhmaṇa. I will bring back your sons, dear master, even if I have to defeat death himself in battle.

COMMENTARY: He had satisfied Śiva, who was disguised as a tribal man, pleasing him by his equal strength. The details are given in Mahābhārata. To console the brāhmaṇa he makes a promise. Decisively defeating (vi-jitya) death himself on the battlefield, I will bring back all the children, not just one son. This is a statement of pride since Arjuna was feeling miserable, with some anger at his friend Kṛṣṇa, famous as the protector of brāhmaṇas, but who had ignored the brāhmaṇa. Kṛṣṇa showed indifference to the brāhmaṇa in order to increase the longing of Mahā-viṣṇu, as expressed later with dvijātmajā me yuvayor didṛkṣuṇā mayopanītā: I brought the brāhmaṇa's sons here because I wanted to see the two of you. (verse 58) Ultimately Kṛṣṇa satisfied the brāhmaṇa and Mahā-viṣṇu.

Text 89.34

evaṁ viśrambhito vipraḥ phālgunena parantapa
jagāma sva-gṛhaṁ prītaḥ pārtha-vīryaṁ niśāmayan

Thus convinced by Arjuna, O tormentor of enemies, the brāhmaṇa went home, satisfied by having heard Arjuna's declaration of his prowess.

COMMENTARY: Seeing, experiencing and hearing (niśāmayan) Arjuna's declaration the brāhmaṇa went home. O conqueror of enemies! It was proper that the brāhmaṇa had faith in the power of Arjuna, your grandfather, as he had described, since he has produced you also, with similar qualities.

Text 89.35

prasūti-kāla āsanne bhāryāyā dvija-sattamaḥ
pāhi pāhi prajāṁ mṛtyor ity āhārjunam āturaḥ

When the wife of the elevated brāhmaṇa was again about to give birth, he went to Arjuna in great anxiety and begged him, "Please, please protect my child from death!"

COMMENTARY: It should be understood that Arjuna remained in Dvārakā for one year until it was time for the child to be born. The brāhmaṇa was afflicted with fear and spoke at night to Arjuna, who was close by. Arjuna had come to the house previously and was staying there. In Hari-vaṁśa Arjuna says:

gate 'rdha-rātra-samaye brāhmaṇo bhaya-viklavaḥ
upāgamya bhayād asmān idaṁ vacanam abravīt
muhūrtena vayaṁ grāmaṁ taṁ prāpya bharatarṣabha
viśvānta-vāhanāḥ sarve nivāsāyopasaṁsthitāḥ

After midnight the brāhmaṇa came to me in great fear and spoke with fear. I came to the village in a second with tired horses in order to stay there.

Text 89.36

sa upaspṛśya śucy ambho namaskṛtya maheśvaram
divyāny astrāṇi saṁsmṛtya sajyaṁ gāṇḍīvam ādade

After touching pure water, offering obeisances to Śiva and recollecting the mantras for his celestial weapons, Arjuna strung his bow Gāṇḍīva.

COMMENTARY: Arjuna offered respects to Śiva, ignoring Kṛṣṇa. This indicates the worship of Śiva would be useless.

Text 89.37

nyaruṇat sūtikāgāraṁ śarair nānāstra-yojitaiḥ
tiryag ūrdhvam adhaḥ pārthaś cakāra śara-pañjaram

Arjuna fenced in the house where the birth was taking place by shooting arrows attached to various missiles. Thus the son of Pṛthā constructed a protective cage of arrows, covering the house upwards, downwards and sideways.

COMMENTARY: He used brahmāstras of various types.

Text 89.38

tataḥ kumāraḥ sañjāto vipra-patnyā rudan muhuḥ
sadyo 'darśanam āpede sa-śarīro vihāyasā

The brāhmaṇa's wife then gave birth, but after the newborn infant had been crying for a short time, he suddenly vanished into the sky in his selfsame body.

COMMENTARY: The child disappeared into the sky.

athākāśe punar vācam aśrauṣaṁ bālakasya vai
hāheti hriyamāṇasya na ca paśyāmi rākṣasam

In the sky I heard the cries of the child as it was being taken away. But I could not see the Rākṣasa who did it. Hari-vaṁśa

Text 89.39

tadāha vipro vijayaṁ vinindan kṛṣṇa-sannidhau
mauḍhyaṁ paśyata me yo 'haṁ śraddadhe klība-katthanam

The brāhmaṇa then derided Arjuna in front of Kṛṣṇa: "Just see how foolish I was to put my faith in the bragging of a eunuch!

COMMENTARY: He criticized Arjuna, who could conquer everyone (vijayam), and who could thus not tolerate any criticism.

Text 89.40

na pradyumno nāniruddho na rāmo na ca keśavaḥ
yasya śekuḥ paritrātuṁ ko ’nyas tad-aviteśvaraḥ

“When neither Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Balarāma nor Keśava can save a person, who else can possibly protect him?

COMMENTARY: How can anyone else protect a person whom (yasya) Pradyumna and others cannot protect? Since the four are the Supreme Lord, and there is no other Supreme Lord, no one else can protect a person.

Text 89.41

dhig arjunaṁ mṛṣā-vādaṁ dhig ātma-ślāghino dhanuḥ
daivopasṛṣṭaṁ yo mauḍhyād āninīṣati durmatiḥ

“To hell with that liar Arjuna! To hell with that braggart’s bow! He is so foolish that he has deluded himself into thinking he can bring back a person whom destiny has taken away.”

COMMENTARY: Arjuna foolishly thought he could bring back a person who was killed by prārabdha-karma or by the will of the Lord. Not only was he foolish but had bad intelligence since he claimed he was better than Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa.

Text 89.42

evaṁ śapati viprarṣau vidyām āsthāya phālgunaḥ
yayau saṁyamanīm āśu yatrāste bhagavān yamaḥ

While the wise brāhmaṇa continued to heap insults upon him, Arjuna employed a mystic incantation to go at once to Saṁyamanī, where Yamarāja resides.

COMMENTARY: Yama was fully capable of bringing back the child because he knew the coming and going of all living entities (bhagavān). Therefore, Arjuna went to him first.

Text 89.43–44

viprāpatyam acakṣāṇas tata aindrīm agāt purīm
āgneyīṁ nairṛtīṁ saumyāṁ vāyavyāṁ vāruṇīm atha
rasātalaṁ nāka-pṛṣṭhaṁ dhiṣṇyāny anyāny udāyudhaḥ
tato ʼlabdha-dvija-suto hy anistīrṇa-pratiśrutaḥ
agniṁ vivikṣuḥ kṛṣṇena pratyuktaḥ pratiṣedhatā

Not seeing the brāhmaṇa's child there, Arjuna went to the cities of Agni, Nirṛti, Soma, Vāyu and Varuṇa. With weapons ready he searched through all the domains of the universe, from the bottom of the subterranean region to the roof of heaven. Finally, not having found the brāhmaṇa's son anywhere, Arjuna decided to enter the sacred fire, having failed to keep his promise. But just as he was about to do so, Kṛṣṇa stopped him and spoke the following words.

COMMENTARY: By his mystic powers he went to Yamarāja, but did not see the child. He then went north to Somapuri. He went to Varuṇapuri and Vāyavya puri. He first went to Dvārakā to ask Kṛṣṇa, who could see everything and all places. Then Kṛṣṇa said "I have not seen the child. You must search for him." He then went to these places, searching. He did not go in the north-east direction of Śiva, since Śiva was his guru. It would be impossible for his guru to take the child. He even went to Brahmaloka, with weapons in his hands. Not having obtained the child for certain (hi), he wanted to enter fire. Kṛṣna spoke to him and made him give up the idea of dying.

Text 89.45

darśaye dvija-sūnūṁs te māvajñātmānam ātmanā
ye te naḥ kīrtiṁ vimalāṁ manuṣyāḥ sthāpayiṣyanti

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] I will show you the brāhmaṇa's sons, so please don't despise yourself like this. These same men who now criticize us will soon establish our spotless fame.

COMMENTARY: I will show you the sons. Kṛṣṇa uses the present tense to indicate the near future, in order to pacify Arjuna. He uses the word naḥ (us) to indicate friendship with Arjuna and their non-difference.

The devatās know your glory, but men do not. Men who did not know, who criticized, will establish our fame, without the fault of not fulfilling

promises (vimalām), by proper knowledge. The Lord breaks the meter because of intense pain for his friend. Another version has yeneha kīrtiṁ vimalāṁ manuṣyā sthāpayanti naḥ: by this act men will establish our spotless fame. Those (ye te) who criticize will establish our fame. Or all men (ye te) will establish our fame.

Text 89.46

iti sambhāṣya bhagavān arjunena saheśvaraḥ
divyaṁ sva-ratham āsthāya pratīcīṁ diśam āviśat

Having thus advised Arjuna, the Supreme Lord had Arjuna join him on his divine chariot, and together they set off toward the west.

COMMENTARY: Having spoken with a promise (sam-bhāśya), the Lord, though capable of bringing back the child just by his will (bhagavān), mounted his spiritual chariot and went to the west just as Arjuna had done, out of curiosity. Here he showed, not his powers as the Lord, but his astonishing knowledge and pastimes of great human prowess. When he was born, all offered respects with folded hands, since he performed a pastime as the Supreme Lord. But now even his horses which had also come from Vaikuṇṭha would hesitate on approaching the darkness, and he would have to use his cakra to remove the darkness (thus showing prowess).

Text 89.47

sapta dvīpān sa-sindhūṁś ca sapta sapta girīn atha
lokālokaṁ tathātītya viveśa su-mahat tamaḥ

The Lord's chariot passed over the seven islands of the middle universe, each with its ocean and its seven principal mountains. Then it crossed the Lokāloka boundary and entered the vast region of total darkness.

COMMENTARY: The chariot crossed the seven islands and even the seven oceans. Another version has sapta-sindhūn. Then it then approached the Lokāloka mountain range.

Text 89.48–49

tatrāśvāḥ śaibya-sugrīva-meghapuṣpa-balāhakāḥ
tamasi bhraṣṭa-gatayo babhūvur bharatarṣabha
tān dṛṣṭvā bhagavān kṛṣṇo mahā-yogeśvareśvaraḥ
sahasrāditya-saṅkāśaṁ sva-cakraṁ prāhiṇot puraḥ

In that darkness the chariot's horses—Śaibya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka—lost their way. Seeing them in this condition, O best of the Bhāratas, Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all masters of yoga, sent his Sudarśana disc before the chariot. That disc shone like thousands of suns.

COMMENTARY: Śukadeva calls out in amazement to Parīkṣit, "O best of Bharata's lineage!" The Lord had arranged the horses to act in this way (bhagavān). Seeing this, he sent his cakra weapon in front, not his effulgence. This illuminated the path.

Text 89.50

tamaḥ su-ghoraṁ gahanaṁ kṛtaṁ mahad
vidārayad bhūri-tareṇa rociṣā
mano-javaṁ nirviviśe sudarśanaṁ
guṇa-cyuto rāma-śaro yathā camūḥ

The Lord's Sudarśana disc penetrated the darkness with its blazing effulgence. Racing forward with the speed of the mind, it cut through the fearsome, dense oblivion expanded from primeval matter, just as an arrow shot from Rāma's bow cuts through his enemy's army.

COMMENTARY: The cakra pierced the dense darkness spread everywhere (mahat), created by the Lord (kṛtam).

Paṅka-bhūtaṁ hi timiraṁ sparśād vijñāyate 'nagha: O sinless one, that darkness spread like clay, which could be perceived by the touch. (Hari-vaṁśa)

Text 89.51

dvāreṇa cakrānupathena tat tamaḥ
paraṁ paraṁ jyotir ananta-pāram
samaśnuvānaṁ prasamīkṣya phālgunaḥ
pratāḍitākṣo pidadhe 'kṣiṇī ubhe

Following the Sudarśana disc, the chariot went beyond the darkness and reached the endless spiritual light of the all-pervasive brahma-jyoti. As Arjuna beheld this glaring effulgence, his eyes hurt, and so he shut them.

COMMENTARY: Then by following the path of the cakra, they crossed prakṛti, by piercing the seven layers of matter. Arjuna then saw the light of the Lord, para-brahman, famous in the Vedānta, by his eyes endowed with cit-śakti. Its supreme position is described with the word "infinite" because it was spread everywhere at all times (sam-aśnuvānam). Arjuna describes this in Hari-vaṁśa:

tatas tejaḥ prajvalitam apaśyaṁ tat tad ambare
sarva-lokaṁ samāviśya sthitaṁ puruṣa-vigraham

In space, I saw the brilliant light, having a human form, spreading to all planets. Hari-vaṁśa 103.24

After the incident Kṛṣṇa gives instructions:

brahma-tejo-mayaṁ divyaṁ mahat yad dṛṣṭavān asi
ahaṁ sa bharata-śreṣṭha mat-tejas tat sanātanam

The divine expanse of Brahman effulgence you have seen is none other than myself, O best of the Bhāratas. It is my own eternal effulgence. Hari-vaṁśa

Kṛṣṇa says that he is that light, since the effulgence and the cause of the effulgence are one.

prakṛtiḥ sā mama parā vyaktāvyaktā sanātanī
tāṁ praviśya bhavantīha muktā yoga-vid-uttamāḥ

It comprises my eternal, spiritual energy, both manifest and unmanifest. The foremost yoga experts of this world enter within it and become liberated. Hari-vaṁśa

This is his prakṛti since it arises from his svarūpa-śakti. It is superior (parā) because it is beyond māyā. It is the root of everything and is thus what is manifest and unmanifest. Therefore the yogīs enter it.

sā sāṅkhyānāṁ gatiḥ pārtha yogināṁ ca tapasvinām
tat paraṁ param

aṁ brahma sarvaṁ vibhajate jagat
mamaiva tad ghanaṁ tejo jñātum arhasi bhārata

It is the supreme goal of the followers of Sāṅkhya, O Pārtha, as well as that of the yogīs and ascetics. It is the Supreme Absolute Truth, manifesting the varieties of the entire created cosmos. You should understand this brahma-jyoti, O Bhārata, to be my concentrated personal effulgence. Hari-vaṁśa

This is my effulgence. The word eva is added after mama to indicate that it is non-different from him, since he resides within it with eight arms.

Text 89.52

tataḥ praviṣṭaḥ salilaṁ nabhasvatā
balīyasaijad-bṛhad-ūrmi-bhūṣaṇam
tatrādbhutaṁ vai bhavanaṁ dyumat-tamaṁ
bhrājan-maṇi-stambha-sahasra-śobhitam

From that region they entered a body of water resplendent with huge waves being churned by a mighty wind. Within that ocean Arjuna saw an amazing palace more radiant than anything he had ever seen before. Its beauty was enhanced by thousands of ornamental pillars bedecked with brilliant gems.

COMMENTARY: Arjuna entered the Virajā River. Padma Purāṇa says pradhāna-parama-vyomnor antare virajā-nadi: between the material and spiritual worlds lies the Virajā River. It had huge waves because of the wind. In the water there was an astonishing palace, surpassing everything in all the worlds. Vai means famous. It shone even more than the brahma-jyoti (dyuta-tamam) since it was adorned with a thousand pillars made of gems which shone by their own power. This indicates also the great size of the palace. Mṛtyuñjaya-tantra describes this place:

brahmāṇḍasyordhvato devi brahmaṇaḥ sadanaṁ mahat
tad-ūrdhvaṁ devi viṣṇūnāṁ tad-ūrdhvaṁ rudra-rūpiṇām
tad-ūrdhvaṁ ca mahā-viṣṇor mahā-devyās tad-ūrdhvagam
kālātikālayoś cātha paramānandayos tataḥ
pāre purī mahā-devyāḥ kālaḥ sarva-bhayāvahaḥ
tataḥ śrī-ratna-pīyūṣa-vāridhir nitya-nūtanaḥ
tasya pāre mahā-kālaḥ sarva-grāhaka-rūpa-dhṛk

tasyottare samudbhāsī ratna-dvīpaḥ śivāhvayaḥ
dhyāyet tatra paramānandaṁ ramyopāsyaṁ paraṁ mahaḥ
smared vṛndāvane ramye mohayantam anāratam
vallavī-vallabhaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ gopa-kanyāḥ sahasraśaḥ

O Devī, at the top of the universe is the great abode of Brahmā. Above that is the abode of the son of Vikuṇṭha and above that, those of Siva's forms in the layer of ahaṅkāra of the universal shell. Above that is an abode of Mahāviṣṇu situated in the mahat-tattva layer, and above that the abode of Durgā, in the prakṛti layer. Above that is time, which brings fear to all, along with time – past and future, full of bliss. Then comes the ever-fresh, excellent ocean of nectar, Virajā. On its bank stays Mahā-Kāla (Mahāviṣṇu), controller of all. In the water on the north side there is an auspicious jeweled island. One should meditate on that most glorious place, full of the highest bliss, worshiped by Ramā. One should remember Kṛṣṇa who enchants everyone continually in attractive Vṛndāvana, and the thousands of gopīs.

Text 89.53

tasmin mahā-bhogam anantam adbhutaṁ
sahasra-mūrdhanya-phaṇā-maṇi-dyubhiḥ
vibhrājamānaṁ dvi-guṇekṣaṇolbaṇaṁ
sitācalābhaṁ śiti-kaṇṭha-jihvam

In that palace was the huge, awe-inspiring serpent Ananta Śeṣa. He shone brilliantly with the radiance emanating from the gems on his thousands of hoods and reflecting from twice as many fearsome eyes. He resembled white Mount Kailāsa, and his necks and tongues were dark blue.

COMMENTARY: Ananta was huge in body (bhoga) because of his unlimited hoods. He was unprecedented. This suggests that Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu was even more splendrous that Śeṣa. Śeṣa shone with the jewels on the hoods of his unlimited (sahasra) heads. He shone even more than the palace.

Text 89.54–56

dadarśa tad-bhoga-sukhāsanaṁ vibhuṁ
mahānubhāvaṁ puruṣottamottamam
sāndrāmbudābhaṁ su-piśaṅga-vāsasaṁ
prasanna-vaktraṁ rucirāyatekṣaṇam
mahā-maṇi-vrāta-kirīṭa-kuṇḍala
prabhā-parikṣipta-sahasra-kuntalam
pralamba-cārv-aṣṭa-bhujaṁ sa-kaustubhaṁ
śrīvatsa-lakṣmaṁ vana-mālayāvṛtam
sunanda-nanda-pramukhaiḥ sva-pārṣadaiś
cakrādibhir mūrti-dharair nijāyudhaiḥ
puṣṭyā śrīyā kīrty-ajayākhilardhibhir
niṣevyamāṇaṁ parameṣṭhināṁ patim

Arjuna then saw the omnipresent and omnipotent Supreme Lord, Mahā-Viṣṇu, sitting at ease on the serpent bed. His bluish complexion was the color of a dense raincloud. He wore a beautiful yellow garment. His face looked charming. His broad eyes were most attractive, and he had eight long, handsome arms. His profuse locks of hair were bathed on all sides in the brilliance reflected from the clusters of precious jewels decorating his crown and earrings. He wore the Kaustubha gem, the mark of Śrīvatsa and a garland of forest flowers. Serving that Lord of groups of liberated Brahmās were his personal attendants, headed by Sunanda and Nanda; his cakra and other weapons in their personified forms; his consort potencies Puṣṭi, Śrī, Kīrti and Ajā; and all his various mystic powers.

COMMENTARY: Arjuna saw the Lord seated comfortably on his snake. His name is not mentioned with the verb to indicate his great astonishment. The Lord spread out everywhere by his effulgence (vibhum) since he had uninterrupted powers (mahānubhavam), since he was superior to the Garbhodakaśāyī forms who were highest among Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva (puruṣottamottamam).

He was served by his extraordinary (sva) attendants, by his intrinsic (nija) weapons—cakra, conch, club, sword, shield, arrows, bow and noose (for his eight arms) with personal forms, having symbols of the weapons on the tops of their heads. He was served by his queens such as Puṣṭi, his śaktis which had personal forms. He was served by all the Brahmās who attained

liberation after their lifespan of two parārdhas. They were at his feet since he had given them liberation.

Text 89.57

vavanda ātmānam anantam acyuto
jiṣṇuś ca tad-darśana-jāta-sādhvasaḥ
tāv āha bhūmā parameṣṭhināṁ prabhur
beddhāñjalī sa-smitam ūrjayā girā

Kṛṣṇa offered homage to himself in this boundless form, and Arjuna, astonished at the sight of Mahā-Viṣṇu, bowed down as well. Then, as the two of them stood before him with joined palms, the almighty Mahā-Viṣṇu, supreme master of all rulers of the universe, smiled and spoke to them in a voice full of solemn authority.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa offered respects to Mahā-viṣṇu as part of his joyful pastimes, as he did to Govardhana. Tasmai namo vraja-janaiḥ saha cakra ātmanātmane: the Lord bowed down to this form of Govardhana Hill, thus in effect offering obeisances to himself. (SB 10.24.36) Viṣṇu was filled with unlimited powers (anantam). Kṛṣṇa, as Svayam Bhagavān, never failed to show his all-pervading nature and other qualities even in this situation (acyutaḥ) but also never failed to act like a human in his pastimes. And though Arjuna was unconquerable, he showed fear on seeing this form. Thus the two offered respects. Both were playing their human pastimes. Kṛṣṇa shows his powers to Brahmā, Akrūra and others. But, as in the Govardhana pastimes, he also acts with human pastimes. Arjuna and others follow this mood. Kṛṣṇa also showed greatness when he consumed the offerings in the Govardhana pastimes. Mahāviṣṇu showed similar power (bhūmā), and he was also Kṛṣṇa's helper, being the lord of all the Brahmās. Thus he spoke with authority. He spoke with words which were bold (ūrjitā) so that Arjuna would respect his words, under the will of Kṛṣṇa. He smiled to indicate his pleasure.

Text 89.58

dvijātmajā me yuvayor didṛkṣuṇā
mayopanītā bhuvi dharma-guptaye

kalāvatīrṇāv avaner bharāsurān
hatveha bhūyas tvarayetam anti me

[Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu said:] O lord who have appeared with your expansions! I brought the brāhmaṇa's sons here because I wanted to see the two of you. As soon as you finish killing the demons who burden the earth, quickly make them come to me.

COMMENTARY: Mahāviṣṇu expressed through his words that the two were greater than himself. O two Lords who have appeared with all your expansions and śaktis to protect the position of brāhmaṇas and other aspects of dharma! I brought the sons of the brāhmaṇa to my abode (bhuvi) because of a desire to see you two. When Arjuna asks, Kṛṣṇa explains in Hari-vaṁśa:

mad-darśanārthaṁ te bālā hṛtās tena mahātmanā
viprārtham eṣyate kṛṣṇo nāgacched anyatheti hi

"He stole the children in order to see me." Kṛṣṇa went on behalf of the brāhmaṇa. Otherwise he would not go there.

This is not astonishing, for it is said:

yan martya-līlaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā gṛhītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
paraṁ padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam

Kṛṣṇa possesses that form suitable for human pastimes to show the full capacity of his yoga-māyā. That form astonishes even the lord of Vaikuṇṭha. It is the pinnacle of auspicious qualities and enhances the beauty of his ornaments. SB 3.2.12

The rest of the verse should be explained. "Now that this has happened and you have seen us, what should be done?" Again, killing the remaining demons on earth, in order for them to come quickly near (anti) me, make the demons attain liberation. According to Hari-vaṁśa the demons on being liberated came to Mahāviṣṇu's abode. Anti is a non-conjugated word with a dative meaning (in order to come to me). Kriya-artha-upapadasya ca karmaṇi sthāninaḥ: the dative case is used to express a suppressed infinitive. (Pāṇini 2.3.14) An example of this is edhobhyo vrajati: he goes (to

bring) fuel. Tvarayetam is a causative form in the potential mood. Having killed them, make them quickly come. This is like the example “Making a glance, send it off.” There are two verbs and one object. The other meaning “You have appeared as my expansions (me kalāvatīrṇau), so quickly return” is problematic since the word me occurs at a distance from kalāvatīrṇau. Even if one takes the meaning as “You should quickly come near me” it can also be explained that this is an aspect of Svayam Bhagavān’s eternal pastimes.

Text 89.59

pūrṇa-kāmāv api yuvāṁ nara-nārāyaṇāv ṛṣī
dharmam ācaratāṁ sthityai ṛṣabhau loka-saṅgraham

Although all your desires are completely fulfilled, O best of exalted personalities, for the benefit of the people in general you should continue to exemplify dharma as the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa.

COMMENTARY: “Since we two are perfect in all ways, how can we be devoted to serving brāhmaṇas?” By your mercy you establish dharma. He proves this conclusion by giving an example. You are the best of all those who appear on earth (ṛṣabhau). Therefore you are full in your desires (pūrṇa-kāmau). You should enact dharma to teach the people, to protect everyone (sthityai). Nara and Nārāyaṇa are your aṁśas. In that form you protect dharma. Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava nārāyaṇo munīnām: I am Nārāyaṇa among the sages. (SB 11.16.25) If that is so, then what to speak of your activities directly as Bhagavān? Ācaratām (perform) does not mean that they should practice becoming perfect. “Come and merge with me (Mahāviṣnu)” and “become Nāra-nārāyaṇa and practice dharma” are both contrary to the traditional understanding.

Text 89.60–61

ity ādiṣṭau bhagavatā tau kṛṣṇau parame-ṣṭhinā
oṁ ity ānamya bhūmānam ādāya dvija-dārakān
nyavartetāṁ svakaṁ dhāma samprahṛṣṭau yathā-gatam
viprāya dadatuḥ putrān yathā-rūpaṁ yathā-vayaḥ

Thus instructed by the Supreme Lord of the topmost planet, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna assented by chanting oṁ, and then they bowed down to almighty Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu. Taking the brāhmaṇa's sons with them, they returned with great delight to Dvārakā by the same path along which they had come. There they presented the brāhmaṇa with his sons, who were in the same infant bodies in which they had been lost.

COMMENTARY: Being ordered in this way, with the intention of performing a special pastime like Govardhana (where Kṛṣṇa was obedient to Govardhana), the two returned to Dvārakā. They were ordered by Bhagavān. This indicates Mahāviṣṇu's powers clearly. The word kṛṣṇa denotes the source of all existence and bliss, para-brahman. Arjuna is included since he has the same name (kṛṣṇau). This also indicates that they had similar qualities and performed human pastimes together because of Kṛṣṇa being para-brahman in human form. They returned to his abode (svakam dhāma), Dvārakā, which is eternal.

Nityaṁ sannihitas tatra bhagavān madhusūdanaḥ: Kṛṣṇa is eternally present in Dvārakā. (SB 11.31.24) They were pleased because Arjuna's desire was fulfilled (getting the sons back) and Kṛṣṇa's desire was achieved (saving Arjuna). They returned as they had come, by going through brahma-jyoti, etc. The sons had the same appearance as when their father had last seen them. This was suitable since Kṛṣṇa was able to do the impossible, as was Arjuna.

Text 89.62

niśāmya vaiṣṇavaṁ dhāma pārthaḥ parama-vismitaḥ
yat kiñcit pauruṣaṁ puṁsāṁ mene kṛṣṇānukampitam

Having seen the domain of Viṣṇu, Arjuna was totally amazed. He concluded that whatever extraordinary power a person exhibits can only be a manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

COMMENTARY: In the First Canto, Third Chapter, it is said kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam. This acts as a paribhāṣa-sūtra for the whole of the Bhāgavatam. Sūtra means that by which the meaning to be explained is shown in brief. Paribhāṣā means a rule or theme which can be applied where not explicitly stated. The statement appears once at the beginning of the work and

spreads through the entire work. Therefore all explanations depend on it. Since Bhāgavatam is the essence of all the Vedas and itihāsas, it is seen to refute all other scriptures with its initial statement. Statements about ākāśa being eternal are thus refuted with the statement ātmani vijñāte sarvam idaṁ vijñātaṁl bhavati: knowing the Lord, all else is known. (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.3) It is said

śruti-liṅga-vākya-prakaraṇa-sthāna-samākhyānāṁ samavāye
pāradaurbalyam artha-viprakarṣāt

direct meaning of scriptural instructions are more authoritative than the logical arguments known as liṅga, vākya, prakaraṇa, and sthāna, and these logical arguments are more authoritative than conclusions drawn from historical accounts (Jaiminī-sūtra 3.3.14) Because of the strength of the various ways of deriving meaning in scriptures, a conclusion cannot be refuted. Uttara-mīmāṁsa agrees that śruti refers to the direct meaning of words. Thus the scriptural statement is

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ pūsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam.

The other methods are discussed in Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha. Among them each is successively weaker. The historical account is a distant authority.

Thus the term Svayam Bhagavān must be used to determine the meaning of everything. This statement is proved everywhere by Śrīdhara Svāmī. Since the Lord performs pastimes with various intentions, one should not take them as indications of Kṛṣṇa's inferior nature. Though after Kṛṣṇa offered respects to the form of Govardhana, Nārada and others considered Kṛṣṇa's actions to be inferior, the conclusion is the opposite[1]. The excellence of Viṣṇu thus culminates in Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa. Thus the explanations given by Śrīdhara Svāmī are correct and Bhagavān as described is Kṛṣṇa.

Text 89.63

itīdṛśāny anekāni vīryāṇīha pradarśayan
bubhuje viṣayān grāmyān īje cāty-urjitair makhaiḥ

Kṛṣṇa exhibited many other, similar heroic pastimes in this world. He apparently enjoyed the pleasures of ordinary human life, and he performed greatly potent fire sacrifices.

COMMENTARY: Remembering many other feats of Kṛṣṇa, Śukadeva speaks with tears and a choked voice. Though he wanted to describe them all, he summarizes everything in three verses (63-65) in sorrow, because of the restrictions on Parīkṣit's life with his voluntary fasting. In the manner stated, Kṛṣṇa displayed excellently in this world many similar astonishing acts. He enjoyed all seemingly material objects as pastimes. He performed most extraordinary sacrifices.

Text 89.64

pravavarṣākhilān kāmān prajāsu brāhmaṇādiṣu
yathā-kālaṁ yathaivendro bhagavān śraiṣṭhyam āsthitaḥ

The Lord, having demonstrated his supremacy, at suitable times showered all desirable things upon the brāhmaṇas and his other subjects, just as Indra pours down his rain.

COMMENTARY: He showered fully, or constantly fulfilled all desires, supplying visible objects to everyone, even the outcastes (ādiṣu). He did this at suitable times. An example is given to show the abundance. He showered abundance just as Indra showers water, since he was full of all powers and qualities (bhagavān), the source of all avatāras. He was eternally situated with the highest excellence.

Text 89.65

hatvā nṛpān adharmiṣṭhān ghāṭayitvārjunādibhiḥ
añjasā vartayām āsa dharmaṁ dharma-sutādibhiḥ

Now that he had killed many wicked kings and engaged devotees such as Arjuna in killing others, the Lord could easily assure the execution of dharma through the agency of such pious rulers as Yudhiṣṭhira.

COMMENTARY: Having directly killed and engaged Arjuna and others in the killing, he established dharma, up to bhakti. Remembering how Kṛṣṇa made everyone happy, Śukadeva wept for a moment. This incident with Mahā-viṣṇu took place after the Pāṇḍavas came out of hiding, since Arjuna mentions that he had satisfied Śiva. After this event, there was a long gap until the time when Abhimanyu was married and Parīkṣit was conceived. During that time, it was possible for Arjuna to go to Dvārakā.

[1] SB 10.69.38 commentary: Nārada, having seen all the pastimes filled with great pleasures, experienced great pleasure. But seeing the Lord's pastimes of worshipping devatās, he was sad.

Chapter Ninety
Summary of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Glories

Text 90.1-2

śrī-śuka uvāca
sukhaṁ sva-puryāṁ nivasan dvārakāyāṁ śriyaḥ patiḥ
sarva-sampat-samṛddhāyāṁ juṣṭāyāṁ vṛṣṇi-puṅgavaiḥ
strībhiś cottama-veṣābhir nava-yauvana-kāntibhiḥ
kandukādibhir harmyeṣu krīḍantībhis taḍid-dyubhiḥ

Śukadeva Gosvamī said: The master of the goddess of fortune resided happily in his capital city, Dvārakā, which was endowed with all opulences and populated by the most eminent Vṛṣṇis and his gorgeously dressed wives. When these beautiful women in the bloom of youth would play on the city's rooftops with balls and other toys, they shone like flashing lightning.

COMMENTARY: Concentrating his mind, in the end Śukadeva remembers a special pastime filled with the highest happiness. This continues until the end of verse 24. First, six verses describe his city, the city of Svayam Bhagavān. Thus, the city was by its very nature most suitable for living joyfully and performing pastimes. He lived there continually (ni-vasan) since it was greater than Vaikuṇṭha. There he lived with his extraordinary consort Rukmiṇī (śriyaḥ patiḥ—master of Lakṣmī). More and more, their details are then described. They had ever fresh beauty and youth that become increasingly remarkable. Having described their beauty, their attractive gestures are described. They played with balls, and also sang and danced (ādibhiḥ). As they moved about while playing, they appeared to be lightning decorating the sky.

Text 90.3-6

nityaṁ saṅkula-mārgāyāṁ mada-cyudbhir mataṅ-gajaiḥ
sv-alaṅkṛtair bhaṭair aśvai rathaiś ca kanakojjvalaiḥ
udyānopavanāḍhyāyāṁ puṣpita-druma-rājiṣu
nirviśad-bhṛṅga-vihagair nāditāyāṁ samantataḥ

reme ṣoḍaśa-sāhasra-patnīnāṁ eka-vallabhaḥ
tāvad vicitra-rūpo ’sau tad-geheṣu maharddhiṣu
protphullotpala-kahlāra-kumudāmbhoja-reṇubhiḥ
vāsitāmala-toyeṣu kūjad-dvija-kuleṣu ca

The main streets of the city were always crowded with intoxicated elephants exuding mada, and also with cavalry, richly adorned infantrymen, and soldiers riding chariots brilliantly decorated with gold. Gracing the city were many gardens and parks with rows of flowering trees, where bees and birds would gather, filling all directions with their songs. Lord Kṛṣṇa was the sole beloved of his sixteen thousand wives. Expanding himself into that many forms, he enjoyed with each of his queens in her own richly furnished residence. On the grounds of these palaces were clear ponds fragrant with the pollen of blooming utpala, kahlāra, kumuda and ambhoja lotuses and filled with flocks of cooing birds.

COMMENTARY: Having described the inhabitants of the palaces, Śukadeva then describes what was outside the palaces. There was always an army with four parts. In the crowded streets there were intoxicated elephants, soldiers, horses and chariots, all with decorations. The chariots shone remarkably with gold.

The gardens are then described. The gardens resounded with the humming of bees and chirping of birds. Kṛṣṇa played intensely (reme). "How?" He played with sixteen thousand wives, while being a single husband. That is, simultaneously he pleased each individual wife. That was not impossible for him, since the one form manifested as many, as Nārada explained on visiting Dvārakā. Though the city was most attractive, the houses were even more attractive (mahārddhiṣu). In relation to water pastimes, Hari-vaṁśa gives the following description:

aham iṣṭā mayā sārdhaṁ jale vasati keśavaḥ
iti tā menire sarvā nārāyaṇaparāḥ striyaḥ
sarvāḥ surata-cihnāṅgyaḥ sarvāḥ surata-tarpitāḥ
mānam ūhuś ca tāḥ sarvā govinde bahumānajam
aham iṣṭāham iṣṭeti snigdhe parijane tadā
nārāyaṇa-striyaḥ sarvā mudā śaślāghire śubhāḥ

ekārpitamano-dṛṣṭyo nerṣyā tāś cakrire 'ṅganāḥ
nārāyaṇena devena tarpyamāṇa-manorathāḥ
śirāṁsi garvitāny ūhuḥ sarvā niravaśeṣataḥ
vāllabhyaṁke śiva-mayaṁ vahantyaś cāru-darśanāḥ

All the devoted wives of Kṛṣṇa thought, "He desires me. He is with me in the water." They were all marked with signs of lovemaking and satisfied with love. They were all proud that they were honored by Kṛṣṇa. "Kṛṣṇa desires me." All the glorious wives praised their good fortune with joy while their attendants rejoiced. The women glanced at him with devotion, never with hatred. All their desires were satisfied by Kṛṣṇa. They always carried their heads with pride. The beautiful women carried auspiciousness in their attractive bodies.

Kahlāra are fragrant. Upala are white lotuses and kumuda are red.

Text 90.7

vijahāra vigāhyāmbho hradinīṣu mahodayaḥ
kuca-kuṅkuma-liptāṅgaḥ parirabdhaś ca yoṣitām

The Lord would enter those ponds, and also various rivers, and enjoy sporting in the water while his wives embraced him, leaving the red kuṅkuma from their breasts smeared on his body.

COMMENTARY: He played in the spotless, fragrant water (previous verse). Mention of lakes indicates other water bodies also. Hari-vaṁśa says they also played in the ocean. The word mahodayaḥ (master) indicates that he was endowed with all materials necessary for playing in the water.

kāścit kāṣṭha-mayais teruḥ plavaiḥ sarvāṅga-śobhanāḥ
krauñca-barhiṇa-nāgānām ākāra-sadṛśaiḥ striyaḥ
makarākṛtibhiś cānyā mīnābhair api cāparāḥ
bahu-rūpākṛti-dharaiḥ pupluvuś cāparāḥ striyaḥ
naubhir gṛha-prakārābhiś cikrīḍur aparājitāḥ
snātānulipta-muditāḥ sāyāhne 'ndhaka-vṛṣṇayaḥ
āyatāś caturasrāś ca vṛttāś ca svastikās tathā
prāsādā nauṣu kauravya vihitā viśvakarmaṇā
bhakṣya-bhojyāni peyāni coṣyaṁ lehyaṁ tathaica ca
bahuprakāraṁ manasā dhyāte teṣāṁ bhavaty uta

nārāyaṇājñayā vṛkṣāḥ puṣpāṇi mumucur bhṛśam
ṛtavaś cānurūpāṇi vihāyasi gatās tadā
vavau manoharo vāto rati-kheda-haraḥ sukhaḥ
rajobhiḥ sarva-puṣpāṇāṁ yuktaś candana-śaityabhṛt
śītoṣṇam icchatāṁ tatra babhūva vasudhāpate
vāsudevaprasādena bhaumānāṁ krīḍatāṁ tadā
uvāha sarva-gandhāḍhyaṁ svacchaṁ vāri mahodadhiḥ
toyaṁ cālavaṇaṁ vīra vāsudevasya śāsanāt
gulpha-daghnaṁ jānu-daghnam ūru-daghnam athāpi vā
nāryas tāḥ stana-daghnaṁ vā jalaṁ samabhikāṅkṣitam

Some beautiful women crossed the water in wood boats. Some dressed up as ospreys, peacocks, and elephants. Others resembled makaras or fish. Other women bathed in the water, taking many forms. The unsurpassable women played in the water using house boats. Joyful with playing in the water, the Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis stayed there till evening. Viśvakarmā made square and round palaces in the boats. Just by meditating, foods to be chewed, licked, drunk and sucked appeared in many varieties. By the order of the Lord, flowers blossomed in profusion. The seasons appeared at suitable times. Pleasant breezes, cool as sandalwood, which gave relief from the fatigue of love making, carrying flower pollen, blew in the sky. It became hot or cold by the desire of those playing, by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. The ocean was filled with clear, fragrant water. It became saltless by the order of Kṛṣṇa. The women went into the desirable water up to their calves, to their knees, to their thighs, and to their breasts.

Text 90.8–9

upagīyamāno gandharvair mṛdaṅga-paṇavānakān
vādayadbhir mudā vīṇāṁ sūta-māgadha-vandibhiḥ
sicyamāno ’cyutas tābhir hasantībhiḥ sma recakaiḥ
pratiṣiñcan vicikrīḍe yakṣībhir yakṣa-rāḍ iva

As Gandharvas joyfully sang his praises to the accompaniment of mṛdaṅga, paṇava and ānaka drums, and as professional reciters known as Sūtas, Māgadhas and Vandīs played vīṇās and recited poems praising him, Kṛṣṇa would play with his wives in the water. Laughing, the queens would squirt water on him with syringes, and he would squirt them back.

Thus Kṛṣṇa would sport with his queens in the same way that the lord of the Yakṣas sports with the Yakṣī nymphs.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa was praised by Gandharvas playing instruments to accompany their singing and by bards reciting Purāṇas with the accompaniment of vīṇās. There was also a screen around the water (so they could not see the playing). The wives and Kṛṣṇa played in the water using syringes. Kṛṣṇa never failed to be at the side of each one of them (acyutaḥ). To show their boldness they are compared to Kuvera and his women.

Text 90.10

tāḥ klinna-vastra-vivṛtoru-kuca-pradeśāḥ
siñcantya uddhṛta-bṛhat-kavara-prasūnāḥ
kāntaṁ sma recaka-jihīrṣayayopaguhya
jāta-smarotsmaya-lasad-vadanā virejuḥ

Under the drenched clothing of the queens, their thighs and breasts would become visible. The flowers tied in their large braids would scatter as they sprayed water on their consort, and on the plea of trying to take away his syringe, they would embrace him. By his touch, their amorous feelings would increase, causing their faces to beam with smiles. Thus Kṛṣṇa's queens shone with resplendent beauty.

COMMENTARY: They became more beautiful. They sprinkled him with water. Sma indicates surprise. On the pretext of taking his syringe they embraced him. Their smiles became more attractive (utsmaya). Sometimes utsava is seen instead.

Text 90.11

kṛṣṇas tu tat-stana-viṣajjita-kuṅkuma-srak
krīḍābhiṣaṅga-dhuta-kuntala-vṛnda-bandhaḥ
siñcan muhur yuvatibhiḥ pratiṣicyamāno
reme kareṇubhir ivebha-patiḥ parītaḥ

Kṛṣṇa's flower garland would become smeared with kuṅkuma from their breasts, and his abundant locks of hair would become disheveled as a result of his absorption in the game. As the Lord repeatedly sprayed his

young consorts and they sprayed him in turn, he enjoyed himself like the king of elephants enjoying in the company of his bevy of she-elephants.

COMMENTARY: The Lord attained the highest bliss. The word tu indicates Kṛṣṇa especially. His garland became smeared with kuṅkuma from their breasts during the water play. Though previously kuṅkuma colored his garland, now it would not come off. He continually sprinkled them and they continually sprinkled him. He was surrounded by young women like an elephant surrounded by his wives. The elephants also like to play in the water.

Text 90.12

naṭānāṁ nartakīnāṁ ca gīta-vādyopajīvinām
krīḍālaṅkāra-vāsāṁsi kṛṣṇo 'dāt tasya ca striyaḥ

Afterward, Kṛṣṇa and his wives would give the ornaments and clothing they had worn during their water sports to the male and female performers, who earned their livelihood from singing and from playing instrumental music.

COMMENTARY: Kṛṣṇa and his wives pleased the dancers and other performers. The possessive case (naṭānāṁ) stands for the dative (gave to the dancers).

Text 90.13

kṛṣṇasyaivaṁ viharato gaty-ālāpekṣita-smitaiḥ
narma-kṣveli-pariṣvaṅgaiḥ strīṇāṁ kila hṛtā dhiyaḥ

In this way Kṛṣṇa would sport with his queens, totally captivating their hearts with his gestures, talks, glances and smiles, and also with his jokes, his grabbing them and his embraces.

COMMENTARY: Two verses (13-14) describe an astonishing fact. In this way, sometimes in the house and sometimes in the water, because of his actions and smiles, etc., as he played, the women's intelligence was stolen away by prema which surpassed all discrimination. Kṣveli means grabbing them. The order of items is of increasing ability to bewilder them. (Embraces were the most bewildering). Kila indicates "Thus it is said" or "Please hear this astonishing fact."

Text 90.14

ūcur mukundaika-dhiyo gira unmatta-vaj jaḍam
cintayantyo 'ravindākṣaṁ tāni me gadataḥ śṛṇu

The queens would become stunned in ecstatic trance, their minds absorbed in Kṛṣṇa alone. Then, thinking that their lotus-eyed Lord was absent, they would talk as if insane. Please hear these words from me as I relate them.

COMMENTARY: They sometimes became as if mad, as if disturbed in mind by some drug. They would sometimes remain silent (agiraḥ) for a moment, as if sleeping. Thinking whether Kṛṣṇa was present or not present, they concluded he was not there, and talked with a loss of all sense of judgement (jaḍam), like talking while asleep. The reason for their madness was that they thought without deviation only of Kṛṣṇa who freed them from all suffering (mukunda). If he was present, he would remain silent, expecting to hear them speak. This is the type of separation called vaicittya (in which the lover is present, but thought to be absent.) This is accepted by Vopadeva in Muktāphala. It is also described by Śriharṣa and others.

Text 90.15

mahiṣya ūcuḥ
kurari vilapasi tvaṁ vīta-nidrā na śeṣe
svapiti jagati rātryām īśvaro gupta-bodhaḥ
vayam iva sakhi kaccid gāḍha-nirviddha-cetā
nalina-nayana-hāsodāra-līlekṣitena

The queens said: O kurarī bird, you are lamenting. Now it is night, and somewhere in this world our husband is asleep in a hidden place. But you are wide awake, O friend, unable to fall asleep. Is it that, like us, you have had your heart pierced to the core by the lotus-eyed Lord's munificent, playful smiling glances?

COMMENTARY: They all speak in a similar manner on hearing the voice of kurarī and other birds since they have the same sentiments. All the queens spoke. By its nature, the osprey cries out. They address the bird. O osprey! In this world you alone stay awake sleepless, and do not desire to sleep (ne śeṣe), since you loudly lament. Our husband (īśvaraḥ), remaining hidden

somewhere in the night which prevents anyone from finding him, sleeps. Or, he remains hidden in the night somewhere in the world. Therefore we infer as follows. O friend! Because you are similar to us in lamenting, you are our friend. Your loud lamention will be helpful to us also.

Text 90.16

netre nimīlayasi naktam adṛṣṭa-bandhus
tvaṁ roravīṣi karuṇaṁ bata cakravāki
dāsyaṁ gata vayam ivācyuta-pāda-juṣṭāṁ
kiṁ vā srajaṁ spṛhayase kavareṇa voḍhum

Poor cakravākī, even after closing your eyes, you continue to cry pitifully through the night for your unseen mate. Or is it that, like us, you have become the servant of Acyuta and hanker to wear in your braided hair the garland he has blessed with the touch of his feet?

COMMENTARY: Hearing the even more plaintive cry of the cakravākī, they speak. Your dear lover is unseen. You cry with great pain and pitifully. Bata indicates lamentation. We are in a similar situation. Alas! We cannot cry so loudly on not seeing our husband, but we cry with a special love for the Lord. Becoming a servant like us, do you desire to wear in your hair the garland used as a pillow by the feet of the Lord full of all qualities and beauty (acyutasya)? Do you desire his touch indirectly in this way because of your intense love? Touching the feet is only suitable for the devotion of a wife. Thus they ask the bird about an article that had touched his feet. Or, like us you have become a servant—becoming his lover, you desire the good fortune suitable for that position. They do not state this directly because of shyness. Similarly, the wives of the brāhmaṇas said:

prāptā vayaṁ tulasi-dāma padāvasṛṣṭaṁ
keśair nivoḍhum atilaṅghya samasta-bandhūn

We simply wish to remain here in the forest so we may carry upon our heads the garlands of tulasī leaves you may neglectfully kick away with your lotus feet. SB 10.23.29

Text 90.17

bho bhoḥ sadā niṣṭanase udanvann
alabdha-nidro ’dhigata-prajāgaraḥ
kim vā mukundāpahṛtātma-lāñchanaḥ
prāptāṁ daśāṁ tvaṁ ca gato duratyayām

Dear ocean, you are always roaring, not sleeping at night. You constantly stay awake at night. Or is it that, as with us, Mukunda has taken your good qualities and you have lost hope of retrieving them?

COMMENTARY: They then speak to the ocean roaring with an even louder sound. The ocean is respected because of being a vibhūti of the Lord. They thus call out with respect, “Bho, bho!” They repeat the word out of great lamentation. Because of being unable to sleep, you are conspicuously (adhigataḥ) staying awake in a remarkable way (pra). In sighing like this, do you experience our suffering? Otherwise why do you do this? Considering for a moment, they then speak again. Perhaps he whose nature is to take away all suffering (mukundasya) has taken away your famous characteristics like depth and steadiness. You are like us and have reached a condition that cannot be overcome. What misfortune!

Text 90.18

tvaṁ yakṣmaṇā balavatāsi gṛhīta indo
kṣīṇas tamo na nija-dīdhitibhiḥ kṣiṇoṣi
kaccin mukunda-gaditāni yathā vayaṁ tvaṁ
vismṛtya bhoḥ sthagita-gīr upalakṣyase naḥ

My dear moon, having contracted a severe case of tuberculosis, you have become so emaciated that you fail to dispel the darkness with your rays. Or is it that you appear dumbstruck because, like us, you cannot remember the encouraging promises Mukunda once made to you?

COMMENTARY: “Though the animals and ocean are wailing with more and more intensity because of Kṛṣṇa’s absence, why is the moon, full of good qualities, silent?” They state the answer indirectly. O moon! You have a serious case of tuberculosis, since your form of nectar has disappeared. Thus, being weak, you cannot dissipate the darkness by your rays, even at a full moon. You cannot destroy the darkness like the sun. Just as we have become thin because of separation from Mukunda and are unable to

remove the suffering by ourselves, you are also suffering, but even more! Considering for a moment they speak again. Perhaps you have forgotten the promises he made when he went away, because of strong feelings arising from separation. Becoming thin because of not determining if he will come, you cannot destroy the darkness. Thus, like us, we see that you cannot speak since you do not answer. At least the osprey and others wailed in answer.

Text 90.19

kiṁ nv ācaritam asmābhir malayānila te 'priyam
govindāpāṅga-nirbhinne hṛdīrayasi naḥ smaram

O Malayan breeze, what have we done to displease you, so that you stir up lust in our hearts, which have already been shattered by Govinda's sidelong glances?

COMMENTARY: In the guise of praise, they criticize the slight breeze at the end of the night, since it acts as an uddīpana for love. The praise is this. O wind from the Malaya Mountains, which were made successful by being the residence of Agastya, and filled with the scent of sandalwood! What have we done to displease you? Govinda who has appeared on earth (go) to remove its burden, has completely pierced our hearts, which support our lives, with his glances like arrows. And now you make consciousness (smaram) again enter our hearts. Or, you revive our love (smaram) for him, what to speak of giving us consciousness. Or you, the wind, understand that passion or smara is like fire, because of your own experiences. Being pierced by his glance, we are dying and you supply the fire (smaram) necessary for funeral rites. Thus what did we do to please you, to make this possible?

Criticism is as follows. O Malaya wind! What did we do to displease you? Nu indicates conjecture. We cannot understand by our intelligence. "Why?" You supply the fire for death rites when our hearts are pierced by his glances. You should not burn those who are dying, pierced by another person. Not able to tolerate a moment's delay, we have become unsteady. Or in such a heart, you are inciting passion. You are a fool. Uselessly you are imitating what has already been done.

Text 90.20

megha śrīmaṁs tvam asi dayito yādavendrasya nūnaṁ
śrīvatsāṅkaṁ vayam iva bhavān dhyāyati prema-baddhaḥ
aty-utkaṇṭhaḥ śavala-hṛdayo 'smad-vidho bāṣpa-dhārāḥ
smṛtvā smṛtvā visṛjasi muhur duḥkha-das tat-prasaṅgaḥ

O revered cloud, you are indeed very dear to the chief of the Yādavas, who bears the mark of Śrīvatsa. Like us, you are bound to him by love and are meditating upon him. Your heart is distraught with great eagerness, as our hearts are, and as you remember him again and again you shed a torrent of tears. Association with Kṛṣṇa brings such misery!

COMMENTARY: Thinking the cloud is crying out of the pain of separation from the Lord, as it showers water into the ocean, they speak of it as his sincere friend on seeing the similarity of the cloud with Kṛṣṇa. Nūnam indicates conjecture. It should be supplied to all the statements. O cloud! You are perhaps a dear friend of the king of the Yādus since you have a form similar to his. "Then what?" It seems you meditate on him since he has remarkable characteristics similar to yours. "What is the use of meditation if the result is less than expected?" The nature of his form is that it produces prema (prema-baddhaḥ), not indifference or hatred. Since you are bound with prema, perhaps you are longing for him. Your heart is affected with various (śavala) bhāvas like nirveda, since you are like us. By your symptoms arising from prema, we can understand about you. Or, because of great longing, your middle portion appears with many colors (śavala). That is suitable since you are like us. Oh! Perhaps on remembering him repeatedly, you sprinkle showers of tears everywhere. The reason is given. Attachment to Kṛṣṇa produces misery. Or any topic about him produces misery.

Text 90.21

priya-rāva-padāni bhāṣase mṛta-sañjīvikayānayā girā
karavāṇi kim adya te priyaṁ vada me valgita-kaṇṭha kokila

O sweet-throated cuckoo, in a voice that could revive the dead, indicating our lover is near, you are vibrating the sounds taught by your lover. Please tell me what I can do today to please you.

COMMENTARY: With the end of the night, they now praise and criticize the cuckoo when it begins warbling. The praise is as follows. O cuckoo famous for singing the fifth note, with sweet voice trained by your lover! You speak words with songs employing the fifth note, like the sounds of your lover. Or you speak words as a messenger containing words given by your lover. Please tell me how I can please you, since your words bring a dead person to life, by revealing that he is near. The singular is used in this verse (me) instead of the plural to indicate the cuckoo's ability to speak to each one of them.

The criticism is as follows. O cuckoo, endowed with a fickle voice! You speak words taught by your lover since the words bring a dead person to life. But I think that dying is better than living because I cannot tolerate separation. You, like him, have produced sorrow by words which bring a person to life. What shall I do with your disgusting beak because of your offense? Please tell me. Think of your own punishment. Otherwise your offense cannot be extinguished.

Text 90.22

na calasi na vadasy udāra-buddhe
kṣiti-dhara cintayase mahāntam artham
api bata vasu deva-nandanāṅghriṁ
vayam iva kāmayase stanair vidhartum

O magnanimous mountain, you neither move nor speak. You must be pondering some matter of great importance. Or do you, like us, desire to hold on your breasts the treasure of the feet of Vasudeva's son?

COMMENTARY: Seeing the solid Raivataka Mountain standing in silence, since all its living entities had been sleeping during the night, the queens speak to it. O upholder of the earth! Though you hold up the earth which is five billion yojanas in breadth, you do not move and you do not speak. Therefore, you are the most intelligent (udāra-buddhe)! They show how this is so. You are contemplating, or do you perhaps desire (kāmayase) some great object? Api indicates a question. Bata indicates lamentation. This great matter could be of great variety, depending on the person. Do you desire the feet of the prominent son of Vasudeva, our father-in-law, worthy of our worship (deva-putra)? Out of shyness they do not directly

say Kṛṣṇa's name, just as the gopīs say ārya-putra. Do you, like us, desire to embrace to your breasts (mountain peaks) his feet which are a treasure (vasu)? If you desire that, you will become foolish like us, unable to maintain your very life. "Breasts" is in the plural rather than dual to indicate intense greed for Kṛṣṇa. If the name Vasudeva is taken as one word, it is not a fault that they say their father-in-law's name directly, since they are in a state of unmāda. The words na calasi and na vadasi are reversed in Śrīdhara's commentary. That seems to be a transcription error.

Text 90.23

śuṣyad-dhradāḥ karaśitā bata sindhu-patnyaḥ
sampraty apāsta-kamala-śriya iṣṭa-bhartuḥ
yadvad vayaṁ madhu-pateḥ praṇayāvalokam
aprāpya muṣṭa-hṛdayāḥ puru-karśitāḥ sma

O rivers, wives of the ocean, your faces have lost their beauty similar to that of lotuses, and your hearts in the form of pools have now dried up. Alas, you have shriveled to nothing because of not seeing your husband, the ocean. Are you, then, like us, who are withering away because of not receiving the affectionate glance of our dear husband, the Lord of Madhu, who has cheated our hearts?

COMMENTARY: Seeing the summer rivers with meager water, thinking the rivers have fainted, they speak among themselves about the rivers without even addressing the rivers, though they addressed the previous subjects. Bata expresses disappointment or lamentation. The wives of the ocean have lost their facial beauty because of no lotuses. Their hearts, the lakes, have dried up. "Why?" You do not receive the affectionate glance of your dear husband, the ocean, because of separation in the form of summer. Ah! The rivers have become like us. Our faces have also withered. The word puru (abundant) indicates that they have become thin and have lost their facial beauty.

Text 90.24

haṁsa svāgatam āsyatāṁ piba payo brūhy aṅga śaureḥ kathāṁ
dūtaṁ tvāṁ nu vidāma kaccid ajitaḥ svasty āsta uktaṁ purā

kiṁ vā naś cala-sauhṛdaḥ smarati taṁ kasmād bhajāmo vayaṁ
kṣaudrālāpaya kāma-daṁ śriyam ṛte saivaika-niṣṭhā striyām

Welcome, swan. Please sit here and drink some milk. Give us some news of the descendant of Śūra, dear one. We know you are his messenger. Is that invincible Lord doing well, and does that unreliable friend of ours still remember the words he spoke to us long ago? Why should we go and worship him? O servant of a petty master, go tell him who fulfills our desires to come here without the goddess of fortune. She is the only woman exclusively devoted to him.

COMMENTARY: With the arrival of morning, they think the swan is a messenger and speak to it. O swan! Have you arrived comfortably (svāgatam)? Or, it is splendid that you have come at this proper time. Please sit down. Drink some milk. Having welcomed the swan, they then inquire. Please tell us! Aṅga indicates great respect. Or, it can indicate "You are part of our body." This means "O intimate friend!" Tell us what our husband, who was born in the Śūra dynasty for everyone's auspiciousness, is doing now. That is proper. We know for certain (nu) that you are his messenger. First they ask about his health. Is he, who cannot be controlled by anyone by love (ajitasya), happy (svasti)? This question shows some internal hatred. "O ladies! How can he be happy in separation from you?" Does he remember our answers to him when he tried to console us? Kiṁ vā (questions) can also be taken as kiṁvā (or). It indicates a question with a frown like kiṁ nu. Or, does he remember the answers he gave to us. "With gratitude he remembers you, since you are so devoted to him." We do not believe that. He is unsteady in love (cala-sauhṛdaḥ). "He is steady in love and desires you, who are most dear to him." Proudly they answer, "Why should we serve him?" "He grants all desires, and thus should be worshipped." Tell him to come without Lakṣmī. She alone is dedicated to him. This is statement uttered in great misery. They did not fear uttering the name of the father of their father-in-law (Śūra) since the name takes a derivative form (śaureḥ).

Text 90.25

śrī-śuka uvāca
itīdṛśena bhāvena kṛṣṇe yogeśvareśvare

kriyamāṇena mādhavyo lebhire paramāṁ gatim

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: By thus speaking and acting with such ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa, the master of all masters of mystic yoga, his loving wives attained the ultimate goal of life.

COMMENTARY: Śukadeva now explains the greatness of the queens having such prema. By such mutual love as described, enacted for Svayam Bhagavān Kṛsṇa, the rarest to attain (yogeśvareśvare), the wives of Kṛṣṇa born in the Madhu dynasty attained the same condition of Kṛṣṇa who spreads everywhere as Svayam Bhagavan (vaiṣṇavīm gatim). They become like him. Or, just as he is all pervading thay also become all pervading. Instead of vaiṣṇavīm sometimes paramām is seen. They attained a purely spiritual condition. The form kriyamānena (present—indicating the queens just mentioned) indicates that some of the queens after the defeat of Arjuna by the thieves (after Kṛṣṇa's disappearance) had some obstacles, and attained another condition—in the material world (where they continued to serve)[1]. It is suitable that the queens attained the goal, since it has been shown that they were the Lord's svarūpa-śakti in relation to their marriage with him.

Text 90.26

śruta-mātro 'pi yaḥ strīṇāṁ prasahyākarṣate manaḥ
uru-gāyoru-gīto vā paśyantīnāṁ ca kiṁ punaḥ

The Lord, whom countless songs glorify in countless ways, forcibly attracts the minds of all women who simply hear about him. What to speak, then, of those women who see him directly?

COMMENTARY: Now Śukadeva glorifies Kṛṣṇa. He who simply being heard, who is the subject of songs sung by many singers or many literary works or who is glorified profusely by singers or literary works, attracts the minds of women. What to speak of attracting the minds of women who see him. Another version has kutaḥ punaḥ instead of ca kim punaḥ. Thus the love of his wives with naturally great prema who played with him always was proper. One may hear other opinions on this matter, because even sages can be bewildered:

ity aṅgopadiśanty eke vismṛtya prāg udāhṛtam
muni-vāsa-nivāse kiṁ ghaṭetāriṣṭa-darśanam

Some men proposed that the troubles were due to Akrūra's absence, but they had forgotten the glories of the Supreme Lord, which they themselves had so often described. Indeed, how can calamities occur in a place where the Lord, the residence of all the sages, resides? SB 10.57.31

Text 90.27

yāḥ samparyacaran premṇā pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ
jagad-guruṁ bhartṛ-buddhyā tāsāṁ kim varṇyate tapaḥ

And how could one possibly describe the greatness of the worship performed by other women, who serve the Supreme Lord, thinking of him as their husband, by mentally massaging his feet.

COMMENTARY: These women were most fortunate and not others, because of their special love. Others just by thinking of him as their husband, though he was not their husband directly, because of prema, served the Supreme Lord (jagad-guru) with complete devotion (sam-paryacaran) by meditating that they massaged his feet. How can one describe the greatness of their worship (tapas)? One cannot describe it. What to speak of describing those who directly serve him eternally as his wives?

Text 90.28

evaṁ vedoditaṁ dharmam anutiṣṭhan satāṁ gatiḥ
gṛhaṁ dharmārtha-kāmānāṁ muhuś cādarśayat padam

Thus observing the dharma enunciated in the Vedas, Kṛṣṇa, the goal of the devotees, repeatedly demonstrated to others the household goals of dharma, artha and kāma.

COMMENTARY: Having described Kṛṣṇa's activities which clearly display his pastime nature, Śukadeva now in a similar manner describes how he gave happiness to all by being absorbed in Vedic dharma. The shelter of devotees absorbed in his pastimes (satām gatiḥ) he is also constantly engaged in dharma like sacrifices prescribed by the Vedas. He showed the household goals of dharma, artha and kāma. He taught this to others since

he is also the shelter of persons dedicated to dharma as much as he is the shelter of persons absorbed in his pastimes.

Text 90.29

āsthitasya paraṁ dharma kṛṣṇasya gṛha-medhinām
āsan ṣoḍaśa-sāhasraṁ mahiṣyaś ca śatādhikam

While fulfilling the highest standards of householder dharma, Lord Kṛṣṇa maintained more than 16,100 wives.

COMMENTARY: After having described the glories of the Yādavas with all the Lord's sons when he became a householder, he now repeats this. He was situated in the most excellent (param) dharma of the householder since he is the shelter of all āśramas. It is also said:

bhikṣābhujāc ca ye kecit parivrāṅ brahmacāriṇaḥ
te py atraiva pratiṣṭhante gārhasthayaṁ tena cai varam

Those who are sannyāsis, vānaprasthas, and brahmacārīs are all dependent upon the gṛhastha-āśrama. Thus it is the best. Viṣṇu Purāṇa

Or this was the best dharma, because through it he could chiefly implement his goals. He was Svayam Bhagavān, who appeared in order to display his unlimited powers. Or, he attracted everyone's heart (kṛṣṇasya) by the sweetness of performing those dharmas. Instead of ca sometimes tu is seen. This makes some distinction. He had eight principal queens (mentioned in the next verse) and he had sixteen thousand one hundred other queens.

Text 90.30

tāsāṁ strī-ratna-bhūtānām aṣṭau yāḥ prāg udāhṛtāḥ
rukmiṇī-pramukhā rajas tat-putrāś cānupūrvaśaḥ

Among these jewel-like women were eight principal queens, headed by Rukmiṇī. I have already described them one after another, O King, along with their sons.

COMMENTARY: Among the best of women were the eight principal queens. They and their sons were previously described in order.

Text 90.31

ekaikasyāṁ daśa daśa kṛṣṇo ’jījanad ātmajān
yāvatya ātmano bhāryā amogha-gatir īśvaraḥ

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose endeavor never fails, begot ten sons in each of his many wives.

COMMENTARY: These are recalled. In all the wives he had ten sons each, who were just like him since his intentions never go in vain. He begot in his wives, at the time they should appear, by his will, ten sons who were the abodes of the highest spiritual elements, since he was the Lord. Since he was the Lord this was not astonishing.

Text 90.32

teṣām uddāma-vīryāṇām aṣṭā-daśa mahā-rathāḥ
āsann udāra-yaśasas teṣāṁ nāmāni me śṛṇu

Among these sons, all possessing unlimited valor, eighteen were mahā-rathas of great renown. Now hear their names from me.

COMMENTARY: Though all the sons had great power, eighteen were special among them, having great strength and prowess (mahā-rathāḥ). Therefore they had great fame (udāra-yaśasas). Or, they were the best in courageous acts and also generous in performing rites (udāra-yaśasas). Hear of them from me. Others give them different names. Because of being discerned as the best, I will tell their names.

Text 90.33–34

pradyumnaś cāniruddhaś ca dīptimān bhānur eva ca
sāmbo madhur bṛhadbhānuś citrabhānur vṛko ’ruṇaḥ
puṣkaro vedabāhuś ca śrutadevaḥ sunandanaḥ
citrabāhur virūpaś ca kavir nyagrodha eva ca

They were Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Dīptimān, Bhānu, Sāmba, Madhu, Bṛhadbhānu, Citrabhānu, Vṛka, Aruṇa, Puṣkara, Vedabāhu, Śrutadeva, Sunandana, Citrabāhu, Virūpa, Kavi and Nyagrodha.

COMMENTARY: Many of these were mentioned in Chapter Sixty-one. Dīptimāṁs tāmrataptādyā rohiṇyās tanayā hareḥ: Dīptimāna and Tāmrataptā were sons of Rohiṇī (chief of the sixteen thousand queens). (SB 10.61.18) Those listed here are the chief sons among the other queens.

Instead of Citrabāhu sometimes Citrabarhi is seen and instead of Virūpa sometimes Virūtha is seen.

Text 90.35

eteṣām api rājendra tanu-jānāṁ madhu-dviṣaḥ
pradyumna āsīt prathamaḥ pitṛ-vad rukmiṇī-sutaḥ

O best of kings, of these sons begotten by Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Madhu, the most prominent was Rukmiṇī's son Pradyumna. He was just like his father.

COMMENTARY: Like their father the sons had great prowess. That is suggested by the name madhu-dviṣaḥ. Among them the best (prathamaḥ) was Pradyumna since he was equal to his father, being the son of Rukmiṇī, who was the best queen. O king of kings! You should understand this since you are famous in the family of kings.

Text 90.36

sa rukmiṇo duhitaram upayeme mahā-rathaḥ
tasyāṁ tato 'niruddho 'bhūt nāgāyata-balānvitaḥ

The great warrior Pradyumna married Rukmī's daughter [Rukmavatī], who gave birth to Aniruddha who was as strong as ten thousand elephants.

COMMENTARY: He was a great warrior because he abducted Rukmavatī in a battle, defeating other kings. Aniruddha was stronger than Pradyumna. They enacted pastimes like humans in this world. Actually, however they were all īśvara (supremely powerful).

Text 90.37

sa cāpi rukmiṇaḥ pautrīṁ dauhitro jagṛhe tataḥ
vajras tasyābhavad yas tu mauṣalād avaśeṣitaḥ

Rukmī's daughter's son [Aniruddha] married Rukmī's son's daughter [Rocana]. From her was born Vajra, who would remain among the few survivors of the Yadus' battle with clubs.

COMMENTARY: Not only did Pradyumna marry his cousin, but Aniruddha also did. That is indicated by the word api. Aniruddha married Rukmī's

granddaughter. From Aniruddha (tataḥ) came Vajra.

Text 90.38

pratibāhur abhūt tasmāt subāhus tasya cātmajaḥ
subāhoḥ śāntaseno 'bhūc chatasenas tu tat-sutaḥ

From Vajra came Pratibāhu, whose son was Subāhu. Subāhu's son was Śāntasena, from whom Śatasena[2] was born.

COMMENTARY: The many sons of Bhadrasena are not mentioned since there is confusion of the dynasty as it began to disappear[3]. Sometimes śrutasenaṣ tu is seen instead of Śatasena.

Text 90.39

na hy etasmin kule jātā adhanā abahu-prajāḥ
alpāyuṣo 'lpa-vīryāś ca abrahmaṇyāś ca jajñire

No one born in this family was poor in wealth or progeny, short-lived, weak or neglectful of brahminical culture.

COMMENTARY: In the family of the Lord (etasmin) no one was born without wealth as the long as the mother and father were pure kṣatriyas.

Text 90.40

yadu-vaṁśa-prasūtānāṁ puṁsāṁ vikhyāta-karmaṇām
saṅkhyā na śakyate kartum api varṣāyutair nṛpa

The Yadu dynasty produced innumerable great men of famous deeds. Even in tens of thousands of years, O King, one could never count them all.

COMMENTARY: One cannot enumerate even those who had the greatest prowess, what to speak of enumerating all the others. It is well known that the Yādava kings in Mathurā numbered five hundred and sixty million.

Text 90.41

tisraḥ koṭyaḥ sahasrāṇām aṣṭāśīti-śatāni ca
āsan yadu-kulācāryāḥ kumārāṇām iti śrutam

I have heard from authoritative sources that the Yadu family employed 38,800,000 teachers just to educate their thousands of children.

COMMENTARY: The reason they cannot be counted is given. For every thousand students there was one teacher. This is well known. Instead of śrutam sometimes śrutiḥ is seen.

Text 90.42

saṅkhyānaṁ yādavānāṁ kaḥ kariṣyati mahātmanām
yatrāyutānām ayuta-lakṣeṇāste sa āhukaḥ

Who can count all the great Yādavas, when among them King Ugrasena alone was accompanied by an entourage of thirty trillion attendants?

COMMENTARY: How can one count them all? One cannot count even the servants. Who can count the chief of the Yādavas? Among them Ugrasena had thirty trillion attendants. Instead of sa āhukaḥ sometimes sadāhukaḥ (always Ugrasena was accompanied) is seen. The present tense indicates the eternal pastimes. This will be established later.

Text 90.43

devāsurāhava-hatā daiteyā ye su-dāruṇāḥ
te cotpannā manuṣyeṣu prajā dṛptā babādhire

The savage descendants of Diti who had been killed in past ages in battles between the devatās and demons took birth among human beings and arrogantly harassed the general populace.

COMMENTARY: The demons were most ferocious and in later births became proud and harassed the population.

Text 90.44

tan-nigrahāya hariṇā proktā devā yadoḥ kule
avatīrṇāḥ kula-śataṁ teṣām ekādhikaṁ nṛpa

To subdue these demons, the Lord told the devatās to descend into the dynasty of Yadu. They comprised 101 clans, O King.

COMMENTARY: To control the demons the Lord told the devatās to appear in the Yadu dynasty. Sometimes the Lord killed the demons and sometimes

he did it along with the devatās (as Yadus). Some entered into bodies of Yadu members and some were born separately as Yadus. Since they were in 101 clans, they are impossible to count.

Text 90.45

teṣāṁ pramāṇaṁ bhagavān prabhutvenābhavad dhariḥ
ye cānuvartinas tasya vavṛdhuḥ sarva-yādavāḥ

Kṛṣṇa alone could estimate the power of all his eternal associates who especially flourished.

COMMENTARY: Only the Lord knows how many eternal associates were present. They numbeed more than those who were not eternal associates. All the Yādavas who were eternal associates of the Lord increased unlimitedly in powers and wealth. Only the Lord could bear witness to the amount of powers they had. Others could not. It was beyond the intelligence of Brahmā, what to speak of the devatās. Hari-vaṁśa says devānāṁ ca hitārthāya vayaṁ yātā manuṣyatām: to help the devatās we came as humans. The Lord (hariḥ) has the power to bring everyone—eternal associates and others—together since he is endowed with his six qualities (bhagavān). That is the significance of hariḥ and bhagavān in this verse.

Text 90.46

śayyāsanāṭanālāpa-krīḍā-snānādi-karmasu
na viduḥ santam ātmānaṁ vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-cetasaḥ

The Vṛṣṇis were so absorbed in Kṛṣṇa that they forgot their own bodies while sleeping, sitting, walking, conversing, playing, bathing and so on.

COMMENTARY: The greatest quality of the Yādavas is described. They were not aware of themselves while sleeping, etc., and even while awake. They did everything under the inspiration of the Lord. They did not have the ability to individually investigate things since they were absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. Playing indicates playing dice. Ādi means even during amorous actions. Nothing could compare with this family. Yad yādavaṁ kulam aho aviṣahyam āste: the Yādava dynasty's strength is unbearable for the earth.

(SB 11.1.3) Kṛṣṇa however had fear of the state of madness that separation from him would cause them. This will be explained.

brahmaṇyānāṁ vadānyānāṁ nityaṁ vṛddhopasevinām
vipra-śāpaḥ katham abhūd vṛṣṇīnāṁ kṛṣṇa-cetasām

How could the brāhmaṇas curse the Vṛṣṇis, who were always respectful to the brāhmaṇas, charitable, and inclined to serve senior and exalted personalities and whose minds were always fully absorbed in thought of Kṛṣṇa? SB 11.1.8

Text 90.47

tīrthaṁ cakre nṛponaṁ yad ajani yaduṣu svaḥ-sarit pāda-śaucaṁ
vidviṭ-snigdhāḥ svarūpaṁ yayur ajita-para śrīr yad-arthe 'nya-yatnaḥ
yan-nāmāmaṅgala-ghnaṁ śrutam atha gaditaṁ yat-kṛto gotra-dharmaḥ
kṛṣṇasyaitan na citraṁ kṣiti-bhara-haraṇaṁ kāla-cakrāyudhasya

When the Lord descended among the Yadus, his glories eclipsed Gaṅgā as a holy place. Both those who hated Kṛṣṇa and those who loved him attained the Lord. He is endowed with the highest beauty and qualities, untouched by others. To see him everyone else struggles. His name destroys all inauspiciousness when heard or chanted. He alone has set forth the principles of the bhakti to the succession of sages. What wonder is it that he, whose personal weapon is the wheel of time, relieved the burden of the earth?

COMMENTARY: After praising the Yadu dynasty as the spiritual foundation, Śukadeva now praises the form of Kṛṣṇa, as the controller of that Yadu family. Svayam Bhagavān relieved the earth of its burden as previously described. That is not astonishing to the devatās since he is in control of time, extending from a fraction of a second to Brahmā's lifespan, which revolves like a wheel that cuts everything. This is his weapon to carry out destruction on its own, without any effort. In order to understand how this is not astonishing, he explains Kṛṣṇa's astonishing features. Though Kṛṣṇa is like this, he appeared among the Yadus for giving mercy to the people and made the foot water of Vāmana called Gaṅgā of lesser significance, by putting his food dust in the Yamunā.

gaṅgā-śata-guṇā prāyo māthure mama maṇḍale
yamunā viśrutā devi nātra kāryā vicāraṇā

The renowned Yamunā in my domain of Mathurā is hundreds of times greater than the Gaṅgā. About this there can be no dispute, O goddess. Varāha Purāṇa

yat-pāda-saṁśrayāḥ sūta munayaḥ praśamāyanāḥ
sadyaḥ punanty upaspṛṣṭāḥ svardhuny-āpo 'nusevayā

O Sūta, those great sages who have completely taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord can at once sanctify those who come in touch with them, whereas the waters of the Gaṅgā can sanctify only after prolonged use. SB 1.1.15

ko vā bhagavatas tasya puṇya-ślokeḍya-karmaṇaḥ
śuddhi-kāmo na śṛṇuyād yaśaḥ kali-malāpaham

Who is there, desiring deliverance from the vices of the age of quarrel, who is not willing to hear the virtuous glories of the Lord? SB 1.1.16

The glorification takes the form of a question by Śaunaka, and thus Kṛṣṇa is not mentioned directly.

Because of him (yat) those who hated the Lord like Pūtanā attained Bhagavān (svarūpam), the root of everything, just like those who had affection for the Lord. Or those who were affectionate to the demons, such as their parents and brothers, attained the Lord. Sad-veṣād iva pūtanāpi sa-kulā tvām eva devāpitā: you have already arranged to give yourself to Pūtanā and her family members in exchange for her disguising herself as a devotee. (SB 10.14.35)

In him resides all excellence of a wealth of beauty and qualities (para-śrīḥ), but he cannot be touched by others (ajita). To see him, others make a great effort (yad-arthe 'nya-yatnaḥ).

yan martya-līlaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā gṛhītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
paraṁ padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam

Kṛṣṇa possesses that form suitable for human pastimes to show the full capacity of his yoga-māyā. That form astonishes even the lord of

Vaikuṇṭha. It is the pinnacle of auspicious qualities and enhances the beauty of his ornaments. SB 3.2.12

adṛṣṭvānyatamaṁ loke śīlaudārya-guṇaiḥ samam
ahaṁ suto vām abhavaṁ pṛśnigarbha iti śrutaḥ

Since I found no one else as highly elevated as you in simplicity and other qualities of good character, I appeared in this world as Pṛśnigarbha, or one who is celebrated as having taken birth from Pṛśni. SB 10.3.41

tṛtīye 'smin bhave 'haṁ vai tenaiva vapuṣātha vām
jāto bhūyas tayor eva satyaṁ me vyāhṛtaṁ sati

O supremely chaste mother, I, the same personality, have now appeared of you both as your son for the third time. Take my words as the truth. SB 10.3.43

But others such as Mahā-viṣṇu take great effort to see him. Though Viṣṇu is the most respectful to brāhmaṇas, he repeatedly stole the brāhmaṇa's children, causing the brāhmaṇa extreme suffering, and thereby committing the fault of disrespect to brāhmaṇas. He made this great effort to see Kṛṣṇa. Vijātmajā me yuvayor didṛkṣuṇā: I brought the brāhmaṇa's sons here because I wanted to see the two of you. (SB 10.89.58) Hari-vaṁśa says:

tvad darśanārthaṁ te bālā hṛtās tena mahātmanā
viprārtham eṣyate kṛṣṇo nāgacched anyatheti hi

In order to see you, Viṣṇu stole the boys. Kṛṣṇa would come for the brāhmaṇa, but otherwise he would not come.

His name, while giving up all other means, destroys all inauspiciousness completely and gives all auspiciousness. Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa says:

sahasra-nāmnāṁ puṇyānāṁ trir āvṛttyā tu yat phalaṁ
ekāvṛtyā tu kṛṣṇasya nāmaikaṁ tat prayacchati

The result of chanting Viṣṇu's thousand names three times is attained by chanting Kṛṣṇa's name once.

Destruction of all inauspiciousness takes place by hearing, what to speak of saying his name.

By him is taught bhagavad-dharma (bhakti) attained through the beginningless line of sages (yat-kṛto gotra-dharmaḥ). The Lord himself says this in the Eleventh Canto and in the Gītā:

ye vai bhagavatā proktā upāyā hy ātma-labdhaye
añjaḥ puṁsām aviduṣāṁ viddhi bhāgavatān hi tān

Even ignorant living entities can very easily come to know the Supreme Lord if they adopt those means prescribed by the Supreme Lord. The process recommended by the Lord is known as bhāgavata-dharma. SB 11.2.34

māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te 'pi yānti parāṁ gatim
kiṁ punar brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayas tathā

O son of Pṛthā, those who take shelter in me, though they be of lower birth —women, vaiśyas and śūdras can attain the supreme destination. How much more this is so of the righteous brāhmaṇas, the devotees and the saintly kings. BG 9.32-33

This dharma pervades everywhere at all times in the universe:

tasmāt sarvātmanā rājan hariḥ sarvatra sarvadā
śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca smartavyo bhagavān nṛṇām

O King! Therefore, at all times and all places without restriction men should hear about, glorify and remember the Supreme Lord with full concentration of mind. SB 2.2.36

Or, gotra can mean "that which delivers the earth (go)." Gotra-dharma therefore means the dharma which delivers the earth. Api cet sudurācāraḥ: I consider even the most sinful to be my devotee. (BG 9.30) Mad-bhakti-yukto bhuvanaṁ punāti: a devotee thus fixed in loving service to me purifies the entire universe. (SB 11.14.24)

Or, by the Lord, the sacrifice (dharma) of the mountain (gotra) Govardhana was performed. In this he showed affection for his devotees and made Indra insignificant. Or, in the worship of Govardhana he made everyone understand dharma in relation to his body (gotra).

na karhicin mat-parāḥ śānta-rūpe
naṅkṣyanti no me 'nimiṣo leḍhi hetiḥ

yeṣām ahaṁ priya ātmā sutaś ca
sakhā guruḥ suhṛdo daivam iṣṭam

My dear mother, Devahūti! O emblem of peace! My weapon, the disc of time, never vanquishes those for whom I am very dear—for whom I am the Supersoul, son, friend, spiritual master, well-wisher, worshipable Deity and desired goal. Since the devotees are always attached to me, they are never vanquished by the agents of time. SB 3.25.38

Or, by Kṛṣṇa was produced various types (gotra) of prema (dharma) in relation to individuals like Nanda, Vasudeva and Yudhiṣṭhira. Or they developed such prema for him.

Or, by Kṛṣna natural, incomparable prema (dharma) in the cowherds (gotra —protector of cows) was produced.

Or, by him was revealed the highest form of all, having the qualities (dharma) of a cowherd (gotra).

It is not surprising that he made the Gaṅgā less in stature, since he made even enemies attain him. That also is not surprising, since he is endowed with the most attractive qualities, untouched by anyone, and is unavailable to others though they make a great effort, since his name alone destroys all inauspiciousness just by being heard, and since he revealed his highest form as a cowherd boy.

Thus, relieving the earth of its burden is not surprising at all. The particular reason is that he has control of time. The reason for everything mentioned is that he is Kṛṣṇa.

Text 90.48

jayati jana-nivāso devakī-janma-vādo
yadu-vara-pariṣat svair dorbhir asyann adharmam
sthira-cara-vṛjina-ghnaḥ su-smita-śrī-mukhena
vraja-pura-vanitānāṁ vardhayan kāma-devam

Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate resort of all living entities, and is also known as the son of Devakī and Yaśodā. He is the guide of the Yadu dynasty, and with his mighty arms he kills everything inauspicious, as well as every man who is impious. By his presence he destroys all things inauspicious for all

living entities, moving and inert. His blissful smiling face always increases the desires of the gopīs of Vṛndāvana. May he be all glorious and happy!

COMMENTARY: Fearing that time had expired and that the listerners were tired, after having heard of Kṛṣṇa's highest position and attaining happiness, Śukadeva consoles them with his own realization. All glories to Kṛṣṇa whose appearance imitating a birth, from Devakī, is the subject of truthful talks with a desire to know. It was not a fake appearance. Or he is said to have been born from Devakī, since he was also born of Yaśodā, as stated in nandas tvātma-ja utpannaḥ: Nanda gave birth to a son. (SB 10.5.1) Kṛṣṇa is victorious (jayati) or shines with all excellence—with his form, qualities, pastimes, associates and abode, embodying all the Vedas. It is not in the imperative (jaya) since it is improper for those in knowledge to give blessings to Bhagavān, who eternally possesses the highest excellence. If blessings were given, that would express that one desired that he should attain such a position. It is like wishing a person who already has good qualities to have good qualities.

"How does he remain glorious?" He is then described, with various associates. Visible proof of his eternal, glorious presence is stated. He is directly the abode for his devotees (jana), the Yādavas and cowherd, whereas he appears as a sphūrti to others. Other meanings are rejected. To show his eternal glory, his associates are further described. He has intimate associates in the form of an assembly (pariṣat) of the best of the Yadus, the kṣatriyas and cowherds. His external devotees are described. He removes atheism by means of his devotees (svaiḥ) who are like his arms and remains victorious. He destroys the suffering of separation for his intimate devotees (moving and immobile) and destroys saṁsāra for the non-devotees.

Then his most intimate devotees are described. He alone always stimulates love (kāma) which shines (devam) intensely in his women of Vraja and Dvārakā by his beautiful face endowed naturally with a splendid smile, since he is the form of the highest prema. Mercy and playfulness are also included in it. His special places, pastimes, qualities and form are indicated by this. Thus, by using all these descriptive phrases, obedient to the word jayati (existing with excellence), Kṛṣṇa, with his associates, endowed with

such pastimes, eternally shines with all excellence in Vraja, Mathurā and Dvārakā.

This is proper for Svayam Bhagavān, since any temporary elements would destroy his nature as Svayam Bhagavān. By not deliberating thoroughly, some words seem unfavorable for this proposition, but actually those words are favorable. In various places in the Tenth Canto these words have been explained.

yayāharad bhuvo bhāraṁ tāṁ tanuṁ vijahāv ajaḥ
kaṇṭakaṁ kaṇṭakeneva dvayaṁ cāpīśituḥ samam

Regarding both burdens equally, the Lord separated himself from that portion of the Yadus by which he removed the burden of the earth, like removing a thorn with another thorn. SB 1.15.34

yathā matsyādi-rūpāṇi dhatte jahyād yathā naṭaḥ
bhū-bhāraḥ kṣapito yenajahau tac ca kalevaram

Just as the Lord maintains forms such as Matsya and gives them up, and just as a magician makes a show of giving up his body, the Lord made a show of giving up his body by which he relieved the burden of the earth. SB 1.15.35

Since he has a non-material or spiritual form, words like tanu, rūpa and kalevara (body) used in the above two verses simply refer to condition (which is not given up). In the Third Canto, describing Brahmā's creation, such a meaning must be accepted, otherwise there is a contradiction. "Why can the Lord not have a material body?" That eternal body, in accepting to relieve the burden of the earth, would become a useless form by a relationship with the effects of māyā. Therefore he is compared to a thorn.

The example of the magician or actor refers to his having a real form and a disguised form which is perceived by his audience. He assumes and then gives up that disguised form (apparently dying). The words ākṛti (form) and deha (body) should also be explained in this way. Thus the rejecting and accepting of bodies merely means that he disappears from and appears in the material world. Madhvācārya has quoted from Tantra-bhāgavata in this regard.

aheyam anupādeyaṁ yad rūpaṁ nityam avyayam
sa evāpekṣya-rūpāṇāṁ vyaktim eva janārdanaḥ
agṛhṇād vyasṛjac ceti rāma-kṛṣṇādikāṁ tanum
paṭhyate bhagavān īśo mūḍha-buddhi-vyapekṣayā

The foolish person covered by ignorance says that the Lord, whose forms like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are eternal and unchanging, incomparable, and without any faults accepts and gives up bodies. On seeing the appearance of Kṛṣṇa or Rāma in the world he declares that they accept material human forms.

Śridhara Svāmī in his commentary on the following verse says the Lord simply appears and disappears since the Lord is all-pervading.

vidhūya tad ameyātmā bhagavān dharma-gub vibhuḥ
miṣato daśamāsasya tatraivāntardadhe hariḥ

The Lord, maintaining his reputation of being affectionate to his devotees, inconceivable in form, and also a thief, having destroyed the brahmāstra, disappeared at that spot from the sight of the child ten months in the womb. SB 1.12.11

pradarśyātapta-tapasām avitṛpta-dṛśāṁ nṛṇām
ādāyāntar adhād yas tu sva-bimbaṁ loka-locanam

Kṛṣṇa, who manifested his eternal form before the vision of all on the earth, performed his disappearance by removing his form from the sight of those who were unable to see him due to not executing required penance. SB 3.2.11

Having shown his form (sva-bimbam) to the eyes of the world, he disappeared. He did not give the body. Similarly he made a show only of giving up forms like Matsya. It is said mukundo bhagavān imāṁ mahīṁ jahau sva-tanvā: Kṛṣṇa left this earthly planet in his selfsame form, (SB 1.15.36) He went to his spiritual abode with that body. When he appears on earth, he attracts all his aṁśa forms and disappears with them. This is explained by Śrīdhara Svāmī in his commentary on SB 11.31.6.

Favorable or agreeing statements will now be listed. Nṛsiṁha Purāṇa says:

yuge yuge viṣṇur anādi-mūrtm āsthāya śiśṭaṁ paripānti duṣta-hā

Yuga after yuga Viṣṇu in his eternal form kills the wicked and protects the righteous.

Therefore when scriptures advocate the worship of the Lord, it is not false. Jaleṣu māṁ rakṣatu matsya-mūrtiḥ: may the Lord, who assumes the body of a great fish, protect me in the water. (SB 6.8.13)

Eternally, there is a variety of śālagrāma-śilas like Narasiṁha. One also hears of the different forms of the Lord because of their presence close by. Thus it is described that the Lord is worshipped in the nine varṣas. In each of the nine varṣas Nārāyaṇa, the Mahāpuruṣa, is present personally as his expansions even today to show mercy to mankind[4]. It is described that there, Pradyumna and other forms perform their pastimes. Pradyumna, with Ramā, eternally enjoys pastimes with graceful gait, flirting, and attractive smiles. It is described that there Saṅkarṣaṇa is present as the object of meditation. The Brahma and Padma Purāṇas describe that Matsya and other forms have separate planets in Vaikuṇṭha. Śruti (quoted in Madhva-bhāsya) says:

vāsudevaḥ saṅkarṣaṇaḥ pradyumno'niruddho'haṁ matsyaḥ kūrmo varāho narasiṁho vāmano rāmo rāmo rāmaḥ kṛṣṇo buddhaḥ kalkir ahaṁ śatadhāhaṁ sahasradhāham amito'ham ananto'ham | naivaite jāyante, naivaite mriyante, naiṣām ajñāna-baddho na muktiḥ, sarva eva hy ete pūrṇā ajarā amṛtāḥ paramāḥ paramānandāḥ

I am unlimited, immeasureable by a hundred, by a thousand times, in the forms of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasiṁha, Vāmana, Rāma, Paraśurāma, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. These forms are not born and do not die. They do not become bound by ignorance or become liberated. They are all perfect, ageless, deathless, and full of supreme bliss.

Śridhāra Svāmī indicates the same in his commentary on SB 11.31.6. Kṛṣṇa's form is the attractive object of meditation. Without that form there is no object of meditation. Even today worshippers directly meet the Lord. In describing the eight-syllable mantra in Trai-lokya-sammohana-tantra it is said:

ahar niśaṁ japed yas tu mantrī niyata-mānasaḥ
sa paśyati na sandeho gopa-veṣa-dharaṁ harim

The person who with a controlled mind chants the mantra continuously sees without doubt the Lord in cowherd clothing.

vṛndāvane vased dhīmāṇ yāvat kṛṣṇasya darśanam

One should reside in Vṛndāvana until one sees Kṛṣṇa. Gautamīya-tantra

tasya hṛṣṭāśayaḥ stutyā viṣṇur gopāṅganāvṛtam
tāpiñchā-śyāmalaṁ rūpaṁ piñchottaṁsam adārśayat

Pleased at heart by these sincere prayers, Viṣṇu, revealed the form of Kṛṣṇa, whose dark form was the color of a tamāla tree, whose hair was decorated with a peacock feather, surrounded by the gopīs. Kṛṣṇa sahasra-nāma-stotra

mām avehī mahā-bhāga
kṛṣṇaṁ kṛtya-vidāṁvara
puras-kṛto 'smī tvad-bhaktyā
pūrṇaḥ santu manorathāḥ

Kṛṣṇa addressed that devotee in the following words: O fortunate one, O best of the wise, know that I am Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord and I have now appeared before you because of your great devotion. I grant you the benediction that all your spiritual desires will become perfectly fulfilled. Kṛṣṇa sahasra-nāma-stotra

paśya tvaṁ dārśayiśyāmi svarūpaṁ veda-gopitam
tato 'paśyam ahaṁ bhūpa balaṁ kālāmbuda-prabham
gopa-kanyāvṛtaṁ gopaṁ hasantaṁ gopa-bālakaih.
kadamba-mūla āsīnaṁ pīta-vāsasam adbhutam
vanaṁ vṛndāvanaṁ nāma nava-pallava-maṇḍitam

"O Brahmā, see my original form as Kṛṣṇa, which I now reveal to you. It cannot be known simply by studying the verses of the Vedas." The Lord then revealed his form to Brahmā, who described this revelation in the following words: O King, I then saw the form of Kṛṣṇa, who was a cowherd boy with a complexion like a dark rain-cloud. He was accompanied by many gopīs, and was laughing and joking with his cowherd friends. He was arrayed in yellow garments and was very handsome and wonderful to see. He was seated at the base of a kadamba tree in the forest of Vṛndāvana,

which was decorated with many blossoming plants and trees. Padma Purāṇa

The eternal form of Kṛṣṇa is also described in the following statement of the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad (1.29):

tad u hovaca brāhmaṇah 'asāṭ anavaratam me dhyātaḥ stutaḥ
parārdhante so 'budhyata. gopa-veśo me purastād avirbabhūva

I continually glorified the Lord and meditated upon him for millions of years, and at last I was able to understand the transcendental form of the Lord. He appeared before me in the dress of a cowherd boy.

That the form of Kṛṣṇa is eternal and is confirmed in the following verse from the introduction (maṅgalācaraṇam) of the Bṛhan-nārādīya Purāṇa:

vande vṛndāvanāsīnam indirānanda-mandiram

I offer my respectful obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, who is a palace that delights the goddess of fortune, and who remains in Vṛndāvana.

In the following verse from the Dvāraka-māhātmya section of the Skanda Purāṇa, Prahlāda Mahārāja tells Balī Mahārāja:

dvārakāyāḥ samudbhūtaṁ sannidhyaṁ keśavasya ca
rukmiṇī-sahitaḥ kṛṣṇo nityaṁ nivasate gṛhe

Accompanied by Rukmiṇī, Kṛṣṇa eternally remains in the palaces of Dvārakā.

vratinaḥ kārttike māsi snātasya vidhivān mama
gṛhānarghyaṁ mayā dattaṁ rādhayā sahito hare

O Lord, who eternally stays with Rādhā, I have carefully followed the rules and regulations of Kārttika-vrata, and I have carefully taken my early bath. In this purified condition I am offering this gift of arghya. Please accept it. Padma Purāṇa, Kārttika-māhātmya

There are many mantras which indicate Kṛṣṇa's eternal form.

govindaṁ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruha-talāsīnaṁ
satataṁ samarud-gaṇo 'haṁ toṣayāmi

I along with the Maruts satisfy Govinda, the form of eternity, knowledge and bliss, who sits beneath a desire tree in Vṛndāvana. Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad

Śukadeva also indicates his worshippable Lord. Prasīdatāṁ me bhagavān satāṁ patiḥ: may the Lord of the devotees be merciful to me. (SB 2.4.20) He shows that the Lord has a human form. Prīyān na indro gavām: may Govinda, the Lord of the cows be pleased with us. (SB 10.26.25)

māṁ keśavo gadayā prātar avyād
govinda āsaṅgavam ātta-veṇuḥ

May Keśava protect me with his club in the first portion of the day, and may Govinda, who is always engaged in playing his flute, protect me in the second portion of the day. SB 6.8.20

Śukadeva also refutes those who are mistaken about Kṛṣṇa's human form.

yat-pāda-pāṁsur bahu-janma-kṛcchrato
dhṛtātmabhir yogibhir apy alabhyaḥ
sa eva yad-dṛg-viṣayaḥ svayaṁ sthitaḥ
kiṁ varṇyate diṣṭam ato vrajaukasām

Svayam Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, whose foot dust cannot be seen by yogīs in samādhi who have controlled their mind by severe hardship for many births, is eternally situated here, directly visible to the eyes of the people of Vraja. Ah! How can the good fortune of the people of Vraja be described? SB 10.12.12

na cāntar na bahir yasya na pūrvaṁ nāpi cāparam
pūrvāparaṁ bahiś cāntar jagato yo jagac ca yaḥ

The Supreme Lord has no beginning and no end, no exterior and no interior, no front and no rear. In other words, he is all-pervading. SB 10.9.13

naumīḍya te 'bhra-vapuṣe taḍid-ambarāya
guñjāvataṁsa-paripiccha-lasan-mukhāya
vanya-sraje kavala-vetra-viṣāṇa-veṇu-
lakṣma-śriye mṛdu-pade paśupāṅgajāya

O worshipable Lord! I offer my obeisances to you to attain you, the son of Nanda, with a body the complexion of a rain cloud, with cloth flashing like lightning, with face shining amont peacock feathers and guñja berry decoration, with colorful forest garland, with beauty enhanced by yogurt rice, stick, horn and flute, and with soft feet. SB 10.14.1

sakṛd yad-aṅga-pratimāntar-āhitā
manomayī bhāgavatīṁ dadau gatim
sa eva nityātma-sukhānubhūty-abhi-
vyudasta-māyo ’ntar-gato hi kiṁ punaḥ

If even only once or even by force one brings the form of the Lord into one’s mind, Kṛṣṇa awards himself as the goal. Residing within, he gives the jīvas the experience of bliss by destroying all māyā completely. What more can be said? SB 10.12.39

aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyaṁ nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām
yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam

How greatly fortunate are Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men and all the other inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi! There is no limit to their good fortune, because Kṛṣṇa gave them prema, which is the highest bliss, eternal and complete. SB 10.14.32

The human form is described:

nanda-vraja-janānandī sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ

Kṛṣṇa’s form is eternity, knowledge and bliss, and gives bliss to the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana. Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa

nityo nityānāṁ cetanās cetanānām
eko bahūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān
taṁ pīṭhagaṁ ye ’nuyajanti viprās
teṣāṁ siddhiḥ śāśvatī netareṣām

The brāhmaṇas who worship, as he stands on his altar, the one who is greatest among the eternals and greatest among conscious persons, and who fulfills the desires of the many, they, and not others, attain eternal perfection. Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad

The devotees (viṣaya) are described:

gopyas tapaḥ kim acaran yad amuṣya rūpaṁ
lāvaṇya-sāram asamordhvam ananya-siddham
dṛgbhiḥ pibanty anusavābhinavaṁ durāpam
ekānta-dhāma yaśasaḥ śrīya aiśvarasya

What worship must the gopīs have performed! With their eyes they always drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's form, which is the essence of loveliness and is not to be equaled or surpassed. That loveliness is the only abode of beauty, fame and opulence. It is self-perfect, ever fresh and extremely rare. SB 10.44.14

tato mām āha bhagavān vṛndāvana-caraḥ svayam
yad idaṁ me tvayā dṛṣṭaṁ rūpaṁ divyaṁ sanātanam
niṣkalaṁ niṣkriyaṁ śāntaṁ sac-cid-ānanda-vigraham
pūrṇaṁ padma-palāśākṣaṁ nātaḥ parataraṁ mama
idam eva vadany ete vedāḥ kāraṇa-kāraṇam
satyaṁ vyāpi parānandaṁ cid-ghanaṁ śāśvataṁ śivam

My form with lotus eyes which you have seen is spiritual, eternal, imperishable, not subject to material transformation, tranquil, and full of eternity, knowledge and bliss. It is most complete. There is nothing superior to this form of mine. The Vedas say that this form is the cause of all causes, independent, all-pervading, all blissful, all knowledgeable, eternal and all auspicious. Padma Purāṇa 4.73.23-25

Thus Kṛṣṇa's mind, forms and qualities are intrinsic to him and unchanging. In the First Canto the earth says:

ete cānye ca bhagavan nityā yatra mahā-guṇāḥ
prārthyā mahattvam icchadbhir na viyanti sma karhicit

In you reside the following eternal, great qualities, which do not disappear at any time, for those who want greatness. SB 1.16.30

Statements which seem to contradict the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa's associates should be similarly explained. That devatās appeared as the Yādavas means that some of them participated in the pastimes along with the eternal associates. The disappearance of the Yadus by force of the curse of the brāhmaṇas is illusory. The Lord says to Dāruka:

tvaṁ tu mad-dharmam āsthāyajñāna-niṣṭha upekṣakaḥ
man-māyā-racitām etāṁ vijñayopaśamaṁ vraja

You, Dāruka, should be firmly situated in devotion to me, fixed in spiritual knowledge and unattached to material considerations. Understanding

these pastimes to be a display of my illusory potency, you should remain peaceful. SB 11.30.49

The meaning of the verse is this. You, Dāruka, know the truth about my pastimes (jñāna-niṣṭhaḥ). You believe that I will protect my devotees and associate with devotees who are similar in quality to me (mad-dharmam āsthāya). Understand that my disappearance pastimes which I now reveal are made by my māyā like magic and disregard the sorrow arising from the external appearance. Go with undisturbed heart. Since Dāruka descended from the Lord's planet as an eternal associate, explaining the verse otherwise is superficial.

At the end of the Eleventh Canto there are three verses explaining this. The first is this:

rājan parasya tanu-bhṛj-jananāpyayehā
māyā-viḍambanam avehi yathā naṭasya
sṛṣṭvātmanedam anuviśya vihṛtya cānte
saṁhṛtya cātma-mahinoparataḥ sa āste

O King! You should understand that the Supreme Lord's appearance and disappearance, which resemble those of embodied conditioned souls, are actually a show enacted by his illusory energy, just like the performance of an actor. After creating this world, he entered into it, plays within it for some time, and at last destroys it, withdrawing from it by his own power. Thus he remains. SB 11.31.11

The meaning is this. Please understand that the activities involved in the appearance and disappearance of Kṛṣṇa's associates (tanu-bhṛt), the Yādavas, is a false picture produced by my su-erior māyā. It is like a magician who makes a person die and then produces his body again. It is like the inconceivable śakti he uses in producing the material world. It is not surprising. Thus it is suitable to say that even today people realize him.

The Lord departs with his associates. This is the proper way to treat them. Thus the reasons given for the disappearance of Balarāma and others are a show for foolish people and thus false. Lakṣmaṇa also did not have a material disappearance. In Ayodhyā-māhātmya of the Skanda Purāṇa, Lakṣmaṇa's disappearance is described:

tataḥ śeṣātmatāṁ yātaṁ lakṣmaṇaṁ satya-saṅgaram
uvāca madhuraṁ śakraḥ sarvasya ca sa paśyataḥ
indra uvāca–
lakṣmaṇottiṣṭha śīghraṁ tvam ārohasva padaṁ svakam
deva-kāryaṁ kṛtaṁ vīra tvayā ripu-nisūdana
vaiṣṇavaṁ paramaṁ sthānaṁ prāpnuhi svaṁ sanātanam
bhavan-mūrtiḥ samāyātā śeṣo'pi vilasat-phaṇaḥ
ity uktvā sura-rājendro lakṣmaṇaṁ sura-saṅgataḥ
śeṣaṁ prasthāpya pātāle bhū-bhāra-dharaṇa-kṣamam
lakṣmaṇaṁ yānam āropya pratasthe divam ādarāt

Then while everyone was looking, Indra spoke in a sweet voice to Lakṣmaṇa, who is always true to his promise, and within whom Śeṣa had merged. Indra said: Lakṣmaṇa! Please rise up and ascend to your own place quickly. O brave one, killer of enemies! You have performed godly tasks. Attain the highest, eternal abode of Viṣṇu which belongs to you. Your aṁśa Śeṣa with shining hoods has also returned. Having said this, Indra, the king of the devatās, surrounded by the devatās, established Śeṣa, who was capable of holding up the weight of the earth, in Pātāla. He then reverently had Lakṣmaṇa mount a vehicle. Indra then returned to Svarga.

Jarāsandha said:

tava rāma yadi śraddhā yudhyasva dhairyam udvaha
hitvā vā mac-charaiś chinnaṁ dehaṁ svar yāhi māṁ jahi

You, Rāma, should gather your courage and fight with me, if you think you can do it. You may either give up your body when it is cut to pieces by my arrows, and thus attain to heaven, or else kill me. SB 10.50.18

Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that Jarāsandha also spoke the truth by offering the alternative that Balarāma would kill him since he thought that perhaps Balarāma's body could not be cut.

The second verse is as follows. Even if they did not have spiritual bodies, was it not possible for Kṛṣṇa to protect them?

martyena yo guru-sutaṁ yama-loka-nītaṁ
tvāṁ cānayac charaṇa-daḥ paramāstra-dagdham
jigye 'ntakāntakam apīśam asāv anīśaḥ
kiṁ svāvane svar anayan mṛgayuṁ sa-deham

Kṛṣṇa brought the son of his guru back from the planet of the lord of death in the boy's selfsame body, and as the ultimate giver of protection he saved you also when you were burned by the brahmāstra of Aśvatthāmā. He conquered in battle even Śiva, who deals death to the agents of death, and he sent the hunter Jarā directly to Vaikuṇṭha in his human body. How could such a personality be unable to protect his personal associates? SB 11.31.12

The meaning is this. Kṛṣṇa brought back the son of his guru who had gone to Yama's abode in the body that he had died in, when swallowed by Pañcajana. The power of the brahmāstra was nothing for him. He protected you, Parīkṣit when you were being burned by the brahmāstra. What more can be said? He defeated Śiva, who is death for death personified in the war with arrows. He had Jarā – the hunter attain a special Vaikuṇṭha with a spiritual body. How is it possible that he could not protect the Yādavas, his own people? Thus, seeing the associates in any other manner is contrary to the pastimes. They went to the Lord's planet with spiritual bodies.

The third verse is as follows. In going to the Lord's abode in their spiritual bodies where the Lord resides, they would not suffer separation. If the Lord is capable of doing that, why is he not capable of making different spiritual bodies for himself and them for some time, to give mercy to the people of the material world? This conclusion shows the mutually unshakeable friendship between the Lord and his devotees. This is expressed in the following:

tathāpy aśeṣa-sthiti-sambhavāpyayeṣv
ananya-hetur yad aśeṣa-śakti-dhṛk
naicchat praṇetuṁ vapur atra śeṣitaṁ
martyena kiṁ sva-stha-gatiṁ pradarśayan

Although Kṛṣṇa, being the possessor of infinite powers, is the only cause of the creation, maintenance and destruction of innumerable planets, he did not desire to remain after the disappearance of his associates. What is the use of being in this mortal world without them? By this he made known the greatness of those who went to his abode. SB 11.31.13

The meaning is this. Although Kṛṣṇa is the only cause of creation, maintenance and destruction and though he has unlimitedly more powers than us, after making the Yādavas disappear, he did not desire to keep his own body here for much longer. Rather he took it to his own planet. The reason is this. “Without them, what is my purpose in this world?” He showed the great position of those who went to his planet since he had such an attraction for them. Like the Lord’s, their disappearance was nothing other than this. In the Third Canto, Uddhava indicates this intenion of the Lord:

mitho yadaiṣāṁ bhavitā vivādo
madhv-āmadātāmra-vilocanānām
naiṣāṁ vadhopāya iyān ato ’nyo
mayy udyate ’ntardadhate svayaṁ sma

When they will quarrel among themselves, with eyes red because of complete intoxication from liquor, they actually will not die, though they will appear to die like others. Only when I decide that they disappear, they will disappear spontaneously. SB 3.3.15

The meaning is this. When Yādavas quarrel among themselves, that is not a means of killing them so that they can leave the earth. What to speak of quarreling with others. When I decide that they should leave, there will be a method. Other than killing there is another method (iyān anyaḥ). “What is that?” By my will (mayi udyate), they will simply disappear. That is certain (sma).

In the Kūrma Purāṇa it is explained that the Sītā stolen by Rāvaṇa was a false form. The stealing of the women of Dvārakā after the destruction of the city was also false, since when they were married it was proved that they were the Lord’s svarūpa-śakti. It is also described elsewhere that the Yadus were injured, fainted and desired to know the truth. This was part of their human pastimes. Sometimes in the prakaṭa pastimes there is a mixture of material affairs, such as the killing of Śatadhanva. However the intimate associates were all like the Lord, since it was shown that they were eternal associates. Favorable statements in this regard are found in the Padma Purāṇa, Kārttika-māhatmya when the Lord speaks to Satyabhāmā:

yathā saumitri-bharatau yathā saṅkarṣaṇādayaḥ
tathā tenaiva jāyante nija-lokād yadṛcchayā
ete hi yādavāḥ sarve mad-gaṇā eva bhāvini
sarvathā mat-priyā devi mat-tulya-guṇa-śālinaḥ
punas tenaiva gacchanti tat padaṁ śāśvataṁ param
na karma-bandhanaṁ janma vaiṣnāvānāṁ ca vidyate

Just like Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata, and Saṅkarṣaṇa, the Yādavas appear in this world by coming from their spiritual planets by their will. All the Yādavas, my associates, are dear to me and equal to me in qualities. They again return to the eternal spiritual abode. Vaiṣṇavas are not bound by birth with the bondage of karma. Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa 229.57-58

janmajarābhām bhinnaḥ sthāṇur ayam acchedyo 'yam yo 'sau saurye
tiṣṭhati yo 'sau goṣu tiṣthati, yo 'sau gopān pālayati yo 'ṣau sarveṣu vedeṣu
tiṣthati, yo 'sau sarvair vedair gīyate yo 'sau sarveṣu bhūteṣv āviṣya bhūtāni
vidadhāti

He is without birth and death, is permanent and cannot be cut. He is situated on the bank of the Yanumā, in the cows, in all the Vedas, and protects the cowherds. He is glorified in all the Vedas and, entering into all beings, supports all beings. Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad

Saurye means "on the bank of the Yamunā, in Vṛndāvana." Thus it is explained that he has the name su-yāmuna in the thousand names of Viṣṇu.

Vṛndāvana is eternal because of the manifestations of prakaṭa and aparakaṭa in the material world. That is clear from the previous examples. The Lord says in Padma Purāna:

nityāṁ me mathurāṁ viddhi vanaṁ vṛndāvanaṁ tathā

Know that Mathura and the forest of Vṛndāvana are eternal.

idaṁ vṛndāvanaṁ ramyaṁ mama dhāmaiva kevalam
atra ye paśavaḥ pakṣi-vṛkṣā kīṭā narāmarāḥ
ye vasanti mamādhiṣṇye mṛtā yānti mamālayam
atra yā gopa-kanyāś ca nivasanti mamālaye
yoginyas tā mayā nityaṁ mama sevā-parāyaṇāḥ
pañca-yojanam evāsti vanaṁ me deha-rūpakam

kālindīyaṁ suṣumnākhyā paramāmṛta-vāhinī
atra devāś ca bhūtāni vartante sūkṣma-rūpataḥ
sarva-deva-mayaś cāhaṁ na tyajāmi vanaṁ kvacit
āvirbhāvas tirobhāvo bhaven me 'tra yuge yuge
tejo-mayam idaṁ ramyam adṛśyaṁ carma-cakṣuṣā

"O master of the people! I desire to hear about the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana. If I am qualified, please tell me." Kṛṣṇa then spoke. This pleasant Vṛndāvana is my only abode. There, all cows, animals, birds, insects and humans are without death. Those who live under my mercy come to my abode on dying. The daughters of the cowherd men live in my abode. Completely giving up all connections, they serve me continually. This place, measuring five yojanas, is non-different from my body. The Yamunā, flowing with the sweetest nectar, is the suṣumnā (central nerve) of that body. All the devas and the elements exist there in a spiritual form. I, the embodiment of all devas, do not leave that forest for a moment, though I appear and disappear in this world age after age. But this radiant forest full of pleasure is invisible to the material eye. Gautamīya-tantra

dvārakāṁ hariṇā tyaktāṁ samudro 'plāvayat kṣaṇāt
varjayitvā mahā-rāja śrīmad-bhagavad-ālayam

As soon as Dvārakā was abandoned by the Supreme Lord the ocean flooded it on all sides, O King, sparing only his palace. SB 11.31.23

Viṣṇu Purāṇa says:

plāvayām āsa taṁ śūnyāṁ dvārakāṁ ca mahodadhiḥ
yadudeva-gṛhaṁ tv ekaṁ nāplāvayata sāgaraḥ

When the Yādavas had abandoned Dvārakā, the ocean flooded the entire city, covering everything with water, except for the principal palace of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

nātyakramat tato brahmaṁs tad adyāpī mahodadhiḥ
nityaṁ sannihitas tatra bhagavān keśavo yataḥ

O brāhmaṇa, because Kṛṣṇa stays eternally in that principal palace of Dvārakā, that specific palace was not covered by the ocean, and remains even today.

Text 90.49

itthaṁ parasya nija-vartma-rirakṣayātta-
līlā-tanos tad-anurūpa-viḍambanāni
karmāṇi karma-kaṣaṇāni yadūttamasya
śrūyād amuṣya padayor anuvṛttim icchan

To protect the principles of devotional service to himself, Kṛṣṇa, the best of the Yadus, accepts the pastime forms that have been glorified here in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. One who desires to faithfully serve his lotus feet should hear of the activities he performs suitable to his human form, that appear like human acts, which make all other actions insignificant.

COMMENTARY: "How does one attain devotion to this spiritual abode?" What is said is not my opinion, but the descriptions of scripture concerning the Lord's pastimes. Like other scriptures, they give results following the instructions given in them. But his abode can be attained simply by hearing. That is explained in this verse. Or, "Please describe the eternal associates situated in the Lord's eternal abode." Please hear the pastimes of the Lord with them. They are eternal. Then this verse is spoken.

As was previously said, one who desires to serve (anuvṛrtim) his feet should hear the activities of the Lord, who is beyond everyone's vision, but by mercy manifests his own form suitable for pastimes with a desire to protect his bhakti (nija-dharma or vartma). That Lord was the shelter (uttamasya) of the Yadus—the people of Vraja, Mathurā and Dvāraka—by performing eternal pastimes with them. The activities of the Lord are described. The activities were suitable for his form and appeared like other persons' actions. Or, his activities made (viḍambanāni) the activities of other avatāras lesser in significance since they displayed unparalleled powers and sweetness.

bhūmeḥ suretara-varūtha-vimarditāyāḥ
kleśa-vyayāya kalayā sita-kṛṣṇa-keśaḥ
jātaḥ kariṣyati janānupalakṣya-mārgaḥ
karmāṇi cātma-mahimopanibandhanāni

Kṛṣṇa, with skillfully bound up hair, whose method of attainment is unknown to men, having made his appearance to relieve the earth of the

suffering caused by the armies of demons, and to relieve the devotees of their pain of separation, will perform activities whose sweetness

will hide his powers. SB 2.7.26

These are activities, but are a test for other activities, defeating the other activities of the universe.

Text 90.50

martyas tayānusavam edhitayā mukunda
śrīmat-kathā-śravaṇa-kīrtana-cintayaiti
tad dhāma dustara-kṛtānta-javāpavargaṁ
grāmād vanaṁ kṣiti-bhujo 'pi yayur yad-arthāḥ

By regularly hearing, chanting and meditating on the beautiful topics of Mukunda with ever-increasing sincerity, a mortal being will attain the divine kingdom of the Lord, where the inviolable power of death holds no sway. For this purpose, many persons, including great kings, abandoned their mundane homes and took to the forest.

COMMENTARY: By hearing one will attain his service. That is described. O King! Anyone subject to death, by thinking of, reciting or hearing the topics of Kṛṣṇa who mercifully frees one from all suffering, attains his abode. Those topics are the producer of all wealth (śrīmat). One hears and then in joy sings them and then remembers them with eagerness. The remembrance continually increases by the singing. By that, the person attains Kṛṣṇa's special abodes such as Vṛndāvana, according to his desires. The abode is described. It cannot be attained by Brahmā and others. It ends (apavargam) the force (java) of time which produces everyone's end (kṛtānta).

pravartate yatra rajas tamas tayoḥ
sattvaṁ ca miśraṁ na ca kāla-vikramaḥ
na yatra māyā kim utāpare harer
anuvratā yatra surāsurārcitāḥ

In Vaikuṇṭha there is no rajas or tamas, and no sattva mixed with rajas and tamas. There is no influence of time. There is no influence of māyā at all, what to speak of its products such as material elements. In Vaikuṇṭha the

inhabitants are fully dedicated to the Lord and are worshippable by the devas, asuras and devotees. SB 2.9.10

iti sañcintya bhagavān mahā-kāruṇiko hariḥ
darśayām āsa lokaṁ svaṁ gopānāṁ tamasaḥ param

Thus deeply considering the situation, the all-merciful Supreme Lord revealed to the cowherd men his abode, which is beyond prakṛti. SB 10.28.14

It has desirable beauty even for persons blind to the highest object. What to speak of being attractive to persons desiring liberation or the devotees, who successively value more and more. Even many persons who enjoy the earth with its seven islands, having the highest goal in mind, gave up all places of human habitation as tasteless, and went to places without materialists, or Mathurā maṇḍala with the twelve forests, since it is auspicious. Going there they stayed there eternally since Mathurā-maṇḍala is the place of the highest sādhana (practice) and sādhya (result). Mahā-varāha Purāṇa says:

na pāpebhyo bhayaṁ yatra na bhayaṁ yatra vai yamāt
na garbhavāsabhīr yatra yat kṣetraṁ ko na saṁśrayet
mathurām ca parityajya yo 'nyatra kurute ratim
mūḍho bhramati samṣāre mama māyāvimohitaḥ

In Mathurā there is no fear of sins no fear of death, no miscarriages. Who would not take shelter of it? One who leaves Mathurā and develops an attraction for another place is a fool. Bewildered by my māyā, he wanders in saṁsāra.

tan maṇḍalaṁ māthuraṁ hi viṣṇu-cakropari sthitam
padmākāraṁ sadā tatra vartate śāśvataṁ nṛpa

O King! The area of Mathurā has Viṣṇu's cakra situated above and has the shape of a lotus eternally. Skanda Purāṇa

lābhānāṁ mathurā lābho jñānānāṁ jñānam uttamam
prītīnāṁ paramā prītir gatīnāṁ gatir uttamaḥ

Mathurā is the best of all ttainments and the highest knowledge among all types of knowledge. It is the dearest among all dear things and is the highest goal among all goals. Varāha Purāṇa

aho madhupurī dhanyā vaikuṇṭāc ca garīyasī

Oh! Mathurā is most fortunate. It is greater than Vaikuṇṭha. Padma Purāṇa

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[1] It is understood that some women of Svarga who became queens later attained forms as women of Vraja in another manifested pastime since they had been cursed by Aṣṭāvakra to be taken by thieves and later attain the Lord. SB 1.15.20

[2] Bhadrasena in some versions.

[3] Some sources say Upasena was the son of Subāhu, and Bhadrasena was his son.

[4] This is described in SB 5.18. Each varṣa has a deity who is prominently worship such as Saṅkarṣaṇa (Ilāvṛta), Hayagrīva (Bhadrāśva), Narasiṁha (Hari-varṣa), Hṛṣikeṣa (Pradyumna or Kāmadeva in Ketumāla), Matsya (Ramyaka), Kūrma (Hiraṇmaya), Varāha (Uttarakuru), Rāma (Kiṁpuruṣa) and Kṛṣṇa (Bhārata).

About the Author-Translator

His Holiness Bhanu Swami maharaja was born in Canada on the 26th December 1948 to the most fortunate Japanese parents. HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja is one of the senior disciples of His Divine Grace A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, founder acharya of ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. He holds a BA Degree in Oriental fine arts history from the University of British Colombia. He joined the Hare Krishna movement in India in 1970. Initiated in 1971 by Srila Prabhupada, he took sannyasa vows in 1984. Bhanu Swami was personally instructed in the art of Deity worship by Srila Prabhupada, and within ISKCON he has become an authority on the topic. He is a great inspiration for many devotees around the world and he preaches Krishna consciousness in Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Russia and India.

HH Bhanu Swami Maharaja met the disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada in 1971 in Tokyo, just after his graduation in history. Srila Prabhupada was about to set on his India tour with his Western disciples and Bhanu Maharaja joined with them.

By 1972, His Holiness Bhanu Swami maharaja already earned credit from Srila Prabhupada for his exact Sanskrit pronunciation, expertise in cooking and excellence in deity worship. He also began to translate Srila Prabhupada’s books into Japanese.

He continues with this translation service to this day, giving us the nectar from the Bengali and Sanskrit works of the previous Vaishnava acharyas to enhance our understanding of the Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy. He is also a member of the Governing Body Commission of ISKCON.

His other works are listed here - https://www.amazon.com/author/hhbhanuswami